

Greek yoghurt cheesecake with ouzo-poached figs

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Craving something sweet? Try this Greek yoghurt cheesecake with ouzo-poached figs.

Ingredients (Serves 16)

Crust

- 15 plain Melba toasts (See Ingredient Notes)
- 1/3 cup walnut halves
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 tbsp coconut sugar

Cheesecake

- 400g reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1 cup coconut sugar
- 2 1/2 cups low-fat or non-fat plain Greek yoghurt
- 7 large free-range egg whites
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla essence

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Topping

- 16 whole dried figs
- 2 cups warm water
- ½ cup ouzo, Mavrodaphne or port wine (see Ingredient Notes)
- 2 rose geranium leaves, plus more for garnish (optional, see Ingredient Notes)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 3-inch strip orange zest
- ½ cup coconut sugar

Method

To prepare crust: Preheat oven to 160°C. Put a kettle of water on to heat for the water bath. Coat a 25cm spring-form pan with cooking spray; tightly wrap the bottom and outside with a double layer of foil.

Process Melba toasts and walnuts in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add oil and two tablespoons sugar and toss until evenly moist. Press the crumb mixture into the bottom of the pan. Bake until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes.

To prepare cheesecake: When the crust is almost cool, beat cream cheese and one cup coconut sugar in a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Add yoghurt, egg whites, cinnamon and vanilla; beat until well blended. Pour the batter over the cooled crust.

Place the cheesecake in a roasting pan and pour in enough boiling water to come 2.5cm up the outside of the spring-form pan. Bake the cheesecake in the centre of the oven until set around the edges but the centre still jiggles, about 45 minutes. Turn off the oven and let the cheesecake sit in the oven with the door ajar for one hour. Let cool on a wire rack for one hour more.

To prepare topping: Meanwhile, place figs in a small bowl, cover with warm water and let soak for one hour.

Strain the figs, reserving the soaking water. Strain the soaking water into a medium saucepan. Add ouzo (or wine); bring to a boil over high heat. Add geranium leaves (if using), cinnamon stick, orange zest and the figs. Reduce the heat to medium and cook until the figs are plump and the liquid is the consistency of a thin syrup, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the figs with a slotted spoon and set aside to cool. Stir half a cup coconut sugar into the liquid, adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and cook until the liquid is reduced by half, 15 to 25 minutes. Discard the geranium leaves, cinnamon stick and orange zest. Chop the figs and return them to the syrup.

Remove the pan sides from the cheesecake. Serve each slice topped with some of the fig sauce and a rose geranium leaf, if desired.

Ingredient Notes

- To make Melba toast, preheat oven to 180°C. Cut bread loaf diagonally in half lengthways. Use an electric or serrated knife to thinly slice into triangles. Place on two ungreased baking trays and bake for four to eight minutes, swapping trays halfway through cooking, until lightly coloured and dry.
- Ouzo is a sweet Greek liquor with a pleasant anise flavor; mavrodaphne is a sweet, Greek red wine similar to port; port is a fortified dessert wine from Portugal. Find ouzo in liquor stores and Mavrodaphne and port in wine shops and liquor stores.
- Rose geranium (Pelargonium) is part of a larger family of 'scented geraniums.' The edible leaves impart a delicate rose flavour when added to desserts, beverages and other foods. The plants can be found near other herbs at garden centres or in gourmet food shops when in season.

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