

Santiago Canyon Winery

Culinary Concoctions

Fresh Cream Cheesecake w Ollaliberry Zinfandel Coulis

Ingredients:

Almond Short Dough Crust: ¼ c. slivered blanched almonds, 1 ½ c. AP flour (all-purpose. I like Giusto's), ½ t. salt, 3 T. sugar, ½ c. cubed cold butter, 1 egg, ½ t. almond extract, ¼ t. fresh lemon zest

Cheesecake: 1 lb, plus 4 oz. artisan cream cheese. (You may use fresh ricotta, fromage blanc, or cream cheese.) If using regular cream cheese, bring it to room temp before using; 1 ¼ c. crème fraiche, 1 c. sugar, 2 t. vanilla extract, 1 t. almond extract, 2 eggs, 4 yolks, 1/3 c. whipping cream
Note: if you love blue or goat cheese, you may substitute the 4 oz listed above for a triple cream blue, such a Blue D'Auvergne or fresh chevre.) Vegetable Spray

Coulis:

½ bottle of Zinfandel, 1 pint ollalibberries, or substitute blackberries, 1 pod star anise, ½ stick Indonesian cinnamon, 5 black peppercorns, sugar, to taste (around ½-¾ cup)

Special Equipment: Mixer, 9 or 10 inch spring-form pan, Silpat, Parchment, Blender, Chinois

For the Cheesecake: Preheat oven to 275 degrees. (Note-this is best done without the use of convection.) In a mixer with the paddle attachment, beat the crème fraiche for a couple seconds. Add the cream cheese and sugar. Beat for a half a minute on low, then increase to medium and beat for 10 seconds. Scrape sides. Combine in a separate pour container: eggs, yolks, cream, vanilla and almond extract. Add slowly to cream cheese mixture on medium speed, scraping half way through.

Pour into the spring-form pan that has been lightly sprayed with the vegetable oil spray. Bake in a hot water bath for one hour at 275. Open the oven for one minute. Turn off the oven. Close. Leave for one more hour. Remove and cover with plastic wrap. Cut holes in the plastic wrap if you like. I often do, just to make sure there is no steam.

For the Crust: There is nothing worse than soggy crust. If you bake the cheesecake in its crust and eat it a few days later, the crust will be soggy. I like to bake the crust separately and assemble them when serving. IT works very nicely. Since the cheesecake will keep for several days, you can bake your crust fresh that day.

In a food processor, pulse almonds, salt, sugar and flour to blend. Be sure the almonds are finely ground. Add the butter to form a coarse crumb. Add egg, almond extract and zest to form dough.

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Turn out on a lightly floured surface and knead gently into a ball. Wrap in plastic and chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 385 degrees. When ready to bake, remove from the fridge at least 15 minutes before rolling. Roll on a lightly floured surface. It need not be perfect, just even. Place on a sheetpan lined with a silpat. Place a piece of parchment over the top, and place another sheetpan on top of the parchment. Check at 12 minutes. You may remove the upper sheetpan and parchment at this point. Finish baking until crust is golden brown.

For the Coulis: Slowly reduce the zinfandel and spices to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Add berries and $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar. Cook at a gurgle for 4-8 minutes. Place in blender and puree until smooth. Pass through a chinois. Chill and reserve until ready. Will keep for one week. May also be frozen.

To plate: Break off a piece of crust. Using a hot knife, slice the cheesecake into desired size slices. Garnish with Coulis and fresh blackberries.

Serve with a bottle of Santiago Canyon Winery Port