



Ricotta Cheesecake

adapted from Cook's Illustrated

serves 8-10

- 5 ounces cookies, processed to uniformly fine crumbs, about 1 1/4 cups (biscotti work well, gf is fine)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, plus 1 more tablespoon, melted, for greasing pan
- 2 pounds best quality fresh ricotta, drained overnight (line a colander with cheesecloth and set over a bowl in the fridge)
- 4 large eggs, yolks & whites separated
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon orange flower water
- 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour (gf is fine)
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon fine sea salt

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 325°. In a small bowl, combine cookie crumbs and 4 tablespoons of melted butter and toss until evenly moistened. Brush bottom and sides of 9" springform pan with most of remaining tablespoon of melted butter, reserving small amount of excess for brushing sides of pan after crust cools. Empty crumbs into springform pan and press evenly into pan bottom (I find fingers work best). Bake until fragrant and beginning to brown around edges, about 13 minutes. Cool on wire rack to room temperature, about 30 minutes. (Do not turn off oven.) Brush sides of springform pan with remaining melted butter.

While crust cools, place drained ricotta in food processor and process until very

smooth, about 1 minute. Add egg yolks, sugar, orange flower water, flour, zest, vanilla and salt and process until blended, about 1 more minute. Scrape mixture into large bowl.

In bowl of standing mixer, beat egg whites at high speed until they hold stiff peaks. Fold whites into ricotta mixture until fully incorporated and pour mixture evenly into cooled crust.

Bake cheesecake until top is lightly browned, about 1 1/4 hours. (Perimeter of cake should be firm, but center will jiggle slightly. It will solidify further as cake cools.) Transfer pan to wire rack and cool for 5 minutes. Run a flat knife between cake and side of pan. Cool until barely warm, 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Wrap pan tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until cheesecake is cold and set, at least 5 hours or up to 2 days.

To unmold cheesecake, remove sides of pan. Let cheesecake stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes, then cut into wedges and serve.