

No Bake Cheesecake

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

I've been called a lot of names in my life, some good and others not so great. I have deserved most of the not so great ones. My favorite thing to be called is U.B. I have six nieces and nephews, and I can still remember my niece, who was 5 or 6 at the time, telling her friend that my real name was uncle Brian, but that everyone called me U.B. for short.

Families are a funny thing. Who else can be your strongest defenders and your greatest agitators, sometimes all at once? Families come together at holidays to cook, eat, celebrate tradition and to irritate each other. As I've often said, "it's not a family holiday until somebody cries."

Almost every Easter, my younger nieces, nephews and I have made a bunny shaped cake and decorated it with Easter candy. When we started this tradition, the kids relied on me to bake and compose the entire cake. More recently, I've brought the components,

sat back and watched them work. There have been some interesting final outcomes, including unruly Twizzler licorice eyebrows and a bunny with a blackened eye. Sometimes I've wondered if there's any frosting at all under the candy.

We've had bunny cake laughter, delight, bickering, and tears (caused by me when I once forgot to bring Peeps). Now the kids are getting older and unfortunately this year I won't see them for Easter. I'll remember the bunny cake magic, but this time around I'll switch to a simpler treat for the holiday.

As the family continues to gather for Easter, I know that one day I'll be able to revive the bunny cake tradition with the next generation. Although G.U.B., for Great Uncle Brian, doesn't have quite the same appeal as U.B., the younger kids can call me whatever they want.

No Bake Cheesecake

Adapted from Nigella Lawson, serves six to eight.

This bake is only slightly fussy, as it works best in a springform pan. If you don't have one, don't worry, a standard 8 inch pan will also work. The cheesecake slices will be slightly more rustic when cut and removed from a standard cake pan, but it's still delicious.

- 1 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 10 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Fresh fruit or preserves as topping.

Combine the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, granulated sugar and salt in a medium bowl and mix until it begins to clump. Then, press the mixture into an 8 inch springform pan, press a little up the sides to form a slight ridge.



Brian Medford

A delicious cheesecake topped with fresh strawberries.

Beat together the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, vanilla extract, and lemon juice in a bowl until smooth. Lightly whip the heavy cream, and then fold it into the cream cheese mixture. Spoon the filling on top of the graham cracker base and smooth with a spatula. Put it in the fridge for 3 hours or overnight.

When you are ready to serve the cheesecake, unmold and finish with fresh fruit or preserves on top.

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