

AUDREY'S BASQUE CHEESECAKE

SERVES 12 - 16

INGREDIENTS

500g quark (or cream cheese)
500g cottage cheese (or ricotta)
350g caster sugar
Finely grated zest of 2 lemons
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
7 eggs, lightly beaten
36g plain flour (or gluten-free cornflour)
2 cups (500ml) crème fraîche
Icing sugar, for dusting, optional

METHOD

- Preheat your oven to 220C. Butter a 25cm springform cake tin then line the base and sides with lightly buttered baking paper; make sure the baking paper comes up about 3cm higher than the top of the tin as the cheesecake will rise to quite a height as it bakes.
- Put the quark, cottage cheese (or ricotta) and caster sugar into a large food processor fitted with the steel blade and whiz, scraping down the sides occasionally, until the mixture is smooth. (If your food processor is small, do this in two batches). Whisk the lemon zest and vanilla extract into the eggs, then with the processor going, slowly pour in the egg mixture and whiz until creamy - you may need to stop and scrape down the sides once or twice as you go. Sprinkle in the flour (or cornflour, if using) and pulse until combined. Scrape in the crème fraîche and pulse until well combined and smooth.
- Pour the mixture into the prepared tin then pop the tin in the oven. Bake the cheesecake for about 40 minutes or until it's puffed and very dark on top, and the middle feels wobbly/firm if you lightly rest the palm of your hand on it and jiggle gently.
- Carefully remove the cheesecake from the oven and sit it on a wire rack to cool completely in the tin. It will collapse quite a bit as it cools and the top may sink and crack a little.
- It's rather lovely served barely warm or at room temperature, but is fragile to slice. To serve, release the sides of the cake tin and remove the baking paper from the sides. Wiggle and slide the cheesecake onto your serving platter then gently wriggle the paper out from underneath (a long palette knife to lift the cake just a little might help at this stage). Some liquid may weep from the cheesecake, if it does, just use paper towel to absorb it. Dust very lightly with icing sugar if liked, although I must admit I rather love the burnt brown top to it.
- It keeps exceptionally well in a sealed container in the fridge for up to a week, but do return it to room temperature before serving for the best flavour.

