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# BAKED INDULGENCES



SOME WITH A  
SOUTH ASIAN TWIST

*Fire up your oven  
to make the best  
dishes of  
the season*

**BINDU GOPAL RAO**

**T**he Med has offered us a variety of delicate dishes, but their sweets daintily walk that line between nuance and excess. Here, we asked some Indian chefs' how they'd infuse the tiramisu with their own flavors, and channel more joy into those many-layered cheesecakes.

## THE HIDDEN DEPTHS OF THE TIRAMISU



A coffee-flavored Italian dessert that uses ladyfingers (savoiardi), coffee, eggs, sugar, cocoa and mascarpone cheese, tiramisu is a much-loved dessert.

A good tip for an easy tiramisu recipe is that, as an alternative, you can layer the tiramisu in a martini glass or ramekin. “Be gentle with the mascarpone cheese,” says Suvaranjan Banerjee, executive chef, Grand Mercure

Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall. “The cheese needs to be folded into the dessert, not whipped rigorously. Ladyfingers should be dipped in the coffee and taken out timely. Leaving the biscuits to soak in the coffee might result in a very soggy dessert.”

You can also make an eggless tiramisu recipe. Rajat Sachdeva, pastry chef, Sofitel Mumbai BKC, says, “for an eggless option, use milk and double

cream in half-n-half proportions instead of eggs. In this case you do not need to make a sabayon or pâte à bombe. Always use mascarpone cheese at room temperature. If you want a set tiramisu in the desired shape, use gelatin leaves. To avoid measurement while piping Savoiardi (ladyfinger cookies), use ladyfinger baking silpat that is available in the market from brands such as Pavoni or Silikomart, which will make your baking easy and consistent. You can use desired shaped glasses or jars to assemble the tiramisu if you don’t want to cut it out or serve separately.”

Always keep the tiramisu in the refrigerator at least for eight hours before serving. Remove the baking sheets from the oven and immediately slide the parchment paper (with the ladyfingers) from the baking sheet onto a wire rack. Let the ladyfingers cool for a minute and then remove the ladyfingers from the parchment paper, using a flat spatula or knife.

Allow to cool completely on a wire rack (if you leave them to cool completely before removing them from the parchment, they tend to stick and are hard to remove without breaking). Always use mascarpone cheese at room temperature.

In case your mixture gets split, then heat over a slow flame on a double boiler and keep it aside to rest for a while. Always remember to cook eggs not more than 75°C–78°C, otherwise eggs will get a crumbly texture. Do not overmix the mascarpone cheese with yolk and espresso mix for a neat tiramisu cake recipe. Just do it slowly with a cut and fold method for the best tiramisu recipe.

### TIRAMISU (COURTESY RAJAT SACHDEVA, PASTRY CHEF, SOFITEL MUMBAI BKC)

#### SERVES 8–10

To make savoiardi (ladyfinger biscuits)

#### INGREDIENTS

- 9 whole eggs
- 11 oz caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3/4 lb refined flour

#### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 390 degrees F and line baking sheets with parchment paper. Have ready a large pastry bag fitted with a 1/2 inch plain round nozzle. To make the piping of the cookies easier, use a pencil and ruler to divide the parchment paper into four 3-inch rows, spacing the rows about an inch apart.
2. Use an electric beater to beat the egg yolks with caster sugar and vanilla extract until the mixture turns thick and shiny.
3. Sieve the refined flour and fold in the yolk mixture by using the cut-and-fold method.
4. Once the batter has attained a smooth consistency, pour into the piping bag.
5. Transfer the batter to your pastry bag and hold the bag at about a 45-degree angle to the baking sheet, pipe the batter into 3-inch long ladyfingers, using the lines drawn on the parchment paper as your guide. Space the ladyfingers about an inch apart.
6. When you have piped all the cookies, place the powdered sugar in a fine strainer and lightly sift the

**NUTRITION FACTS**  
**Serving size; 3 oz**  
**220 Kcal**  
**17g carbohydrates**  
**21g fat**  
**4g protein**

7. sugar over the tops of the cookies. Bake for about 8 minutes, or until the ladyfingers are firm but barely brown, and still soft and spongy when lightly pressed.
7. Remove the baking sheets from the oven and immediately slide the parchment paper (with the ladyfingers) from the baking sheet onto a wire rack. Let the ladyfingers cool for a minute and then remove them from the parchment paper using a flat spatula or knife.
8. Let everything cool on a wire rack (if you leave them completely cool before removing from the parchment they tend to stick and are hard to remove without breaking).
9. Makes about 96 3-inch ladyfingers.

#### TO MAKE THE TIRAMISU MIXTURE

#### INGREDIENTS

- 10 egg yolks
- 5 oz caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 oz Kalua
- 3 oz espresso
- 1 2/3 oz mascarpone cheese
- 1/4 oz fresh heavy cream

#### METHOD

1. Place the sugar and water in a pan or small pot and make it boil over medium-high heat. You want to see it really boiling. It should reach up to 212 degrees F to 216 degrees F.



2. Once it is about to boil and reaches up to 192°F, start beating the egg yolks at high speed. Add the syrup down the side of the bowl but remember to only add the syrup into eggs once it reaches 212 degrees F. Keep beating on high speed until the mix has cooled down completely. It should look very thick and foamy. This technique is called a “pâté à bombe.”
3. Keep the pâté à bombe in a bowl to one side, and put the cream and mascarpone in the whipping bowl.
4. Whip up the cream with the mascarpone cheese until you have a thick and smooth mix. Start at low speed so that it doesn’t go everywhere, then speed it up slowly.
5. Add half the pâté à bombe to the mascarpone mix and mix them together using a spatula and folding motions. Repeat with the other half.

#### TO SOAK AND ASSEMBLE:

- Dissolve the sugar and coffee in the boiling water and let it cool completely before soaking the ladyfingers.
- Dip the ladyfingers in the coffee for a few seconds (we don’t want them to fall apart). Lay a base of the soaked ladyfingers on the base of the desired dish or pan. Pour in half the tiramisu mix into the pan and repeat the ladyfinger layer on top. Finish with the final layer of tiramisu mix on the ladyfinger layer and spread it out.
- Refrigerate the tiramisu for at least 8 hours.
- Dust cocoa powder over the tiramisu and serve using a sharp knife with a non-serrated blade and use a spatula to lift off the pieces.

## THE LAYERED GOODNESS OF CHEESECAKES

A cheesecake is all about having layers of ingredients that create a fantasy on your taste buds which adds to its infinite charm.

A layered cake that can be baked or unbaked, cheesecake is a dessert that can take many forms. Cheesecakes reputedly originated in ancient Greece, and were served to athletes at the first Olympic Games. The word 'cheesecake' was coined in the 15th century and the dish is believed to have evolved into its current form in the 18th century.

An easy cheesecake recipe was about combining cream, condensed milk, and cheese over a biscuit butter base. There are many ways to make simple cheesecake recipes and traditional cheesecake recipes that you can find online. The ingredients which are used in cheesecake are cream cheese, icing sugar, caster sugar, corn flour, sour cream, flavors.

So, as a flavor, we are using mango pulp and mango dicing. To make cheesecake healthier, you can use buckwheat flour and substitute corn flour with egg. For the best cheesecake, avoid whipped cream cheese and use cream cheese blocks instead. Do not poke in the center of the cheesecake to see if it is cooked, and do not open the oven while the cheesecake is being baked. Do not overbake the cheesecake as that will result in cracks, and spoil the texture of the cake.

Chef Harish Kumar of Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla says, "all the ingredients be it cream cheese, eggs, sour cream or even sugar should always be at room temperature to

ensure that cheesecake is not lumpy and that the ingredients blend in smoothly. Adding a little flour or cornstarch in the cheesecake also prevents eggs from over coagulating.

Every country has its own version of what they call a cheesecake. It is these myriad interpretations that make the dish much loved across the world. Unlike traditional cakes that are always baked, a cheesecake can be non-baked, which adds to its charm. It is also a great way for non-bakers to start making desserts.

Sameer Khot, pastry chef, Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences, shares some tips on how to make cheesecake: "When making cheesecake, don't over mix the batter or mix on too high speed. Both overmixing and mixing at a high speed add more air to a batter. Too much air in a cheesecake can cause cracks in a few ways."

Durbar Basu Ray, pastry chef, Novotel ibis Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, says, "Do not mix the batter at high speed, or overmix. Use little corn starch. It will prevent cracks and give it a creamier texture. Cream cheese used for the recipe should always be used at room temperature to avoid lump formation, and it also helps in mixing evenly." For an original cheesecake, make sure not to use any additions, such as fruits or chocolates, and using a combination of cream cheese, sugar, sour cream, eggs and vanilla essence you can create a decadent delight in your kitchen.

Motichur crumble cheesecake (Courtesy Sumiet Raghuvanshi, corporate chef, White Castle



**Nutrition Facts**  
**Serving Size: 122 g**  
**400 kcal**  
**29g carbs**  
**29g fat**  
**7g protein**

Hospitality, which owns M Bar Kitchen, Ozora & Mozza in Kolkata)

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 oz Philadelphia cheese
- 1 3/4 oz whipped cream
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 motichur ladoos (available on Amazon)
- 1 tsp gelatin
- 1 tablespoon pomegranate (according to taste)
- Few mint leaves
- 1 small packet of Oreos
- 4 tbsp pancake batter
- Salted caramel for garnish
- 1/2 cup refined flour
- Powdered sugar for garnish

### METHOD

1. **First layer:** Mix equal amounts of refined flour and butter together to make a dough of uneven texture, and leave it in the fridge for half an hour. Then, using a rolling pin and some flour, spread the dough to an even thickness and bake at 330 degrees F for 12 min. Let it cool. Then crush it evenly to make the crust of the cheesecake. Put it in the fridge to set.



2. **Second layer:** Break the motichur ladoo in a bowl; prepare gelatin and mix it with the ladoo. Put the ladoo mixture on top of the already set layer of homemade cookie.
3. **Third layer:** Mix Philadelphia cheese and whipped cream sugar into a uniform mixture. Add fresh pomegranate and mint leaves into

- the mixture. Mix everything gently and then pour the mixture on top of the motichur layer. Level it evenly and let it set for two hours.
4. **Oreo pakora:** Freeze the Oreos for an hour, dip it in pancake batter, and fry it in medium hot oil. Cook evenly from both sides and take out on a tissue paper to soak the excess oil.

Dip the hot pakora salted caramel and sprinkle powdered sugar.

**Tip:** you can use a Corning bowl to set the cheesecake if you don't have a cake ring.

**Garnish:** use fresh pomegranate, mint leaves and Oreo pakora as a garnish.