

Bacon Stout Chocolate Cheesecake

For the Crust:

4 standard sized graham crackers
1 cup pretzel rods
2 Tbsp granulated sugar
6 Tbsp butter, melted

For the filling:

7 oz dark chocolate (60%)
1 cup chocolate stout
3 (8 oz) packages of cream cheese, softened
1 1/4 cup sugar
3 eggs
2 tbsp flour
1/3 cup cocoa powder
1 tbs espresso powder
3/4 cup beer-candied bacon, finely chopped

For the topping:

2/3 cup hot fudge sauce
1/2 cup beer-candied bacon, finely chopped

Beer-candied bacon:

1 lb thick-cut, high quality bacon
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup + 2 tbsp chocolate stout

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Combine brown sugar and beer in a small bowl, whisking well to form a thin syrup. Set aside.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Place a wire cooling rack on top. Place the pieces of bacon on top of the rack, overlapping if necessary. Place in oven and cook for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and brush one side of the bacon with the beer syrup. Flip, and coat the other side with the syrup as well. Return to oven and cook for 10 minutes. Remove from oven, and repeat process another time or two more, until bacon is crispy and browned, and you've used all the glaze. Cool on wire rack for at least 1 hour.

Hot fudge sauce:

1/2 cup butter

8 ounces bittersweet or dark chocolate, chopped

1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk

Melt butter and chocolate in medium saucepan over medium heat. Once melted, add the sweetened condensed milk and stir to combine. Don't worry, it will take a couple of minutes to fully incorporate. Just keep stirring! Remove from heat and store in an airtight jar or container in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

Place one oven rack in the middle position, with one rack below. Preheat oven to 350.

In a food processor add the graham crackers, sugar and the pretzels and process until it's the consistency of crumbs. Turn the food processor on, and slowly stream in the butter and process until it resembles wet sand. Spray the inside of a 9-inch spring form pan with non-stick cooking spray. Pour the processed crumbs into the spring form pan. Using the bottom of a heavy, flat bottom glass, press the crust very well into the bottom of the pan until well compacted.

In a pot over medium high heat, add the beer and the chocolate, stir until melted and remove from heat. Allow to cool.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, add the cream cheese and the sugar and mix until smooth. One at a time, add the eggs, scraping the bottom of the bowl between additions. Pour the cooled chocolate into the mixer and beat until well combined. Lift the head of the mixer and add flour, cocoa powder, espresso powder, and bacon over the batter, stir on low speed until just combined.

Pour the batter into the pan over the crust. Place the pan in the oven in the middle position. Place a baking dish on the rack below the cheesecake, fill with water. Bake the cheesecake until the center no longer jiggles when you shake the rack, about 45-50 minutes.

For the topping, warm your hot fudge sauce so that it is pourable. Pour onto the center of the cheesecake carefully, and allow to sit and solidify for 15 minutes. Top the chocolate with the chopped bacon. If desired, top with fresh whipped cream.