

Heaven in a Bowl: The Ultimate No-Bake Layered Dessert

Sometimes, a dessert comes along that perfectly lives up to its name. For me, that's



TIME
2 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

SOURCE
ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

For the Creamy Base: 1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened

¾ cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 (8 oz) tub Cool Whip, thawed (or 2 cups homemade whipped cream)

For the Chocolate Layer: 1 (3.9 oz) package instant chocolate fudge pudding mix

2 cups cold milk (whole milk recommended)

For the Crunchy Layer (optional but recommended): 1

¾ cups crushed Oreos or graham crackers (about 15-20 cookies)

Optional Toppings/Garnish: Chocolate shavings, mini chocolate chips, or cocoa powder

Extra whipped cream

Fresh berries (strawberries, raspberries)

Swaps and Notes:

Cream Cheese: Ensure your cream cheese is completely softened to room temperature for a smooth, lump-free base. Full-fat cream cheese offers the best richness.

Cool Whip: This provides a light, airy texture and good stability. If you prefer homemade, whip 1 cup of heavy cream with 2-3 tablespoons of powdered sugar until stiff peaks form to yield about 2 cups.

Pudding Mix: Instant chocolate fudge pudding mix is used here for a deep chocolate flavor and quick setting. You could also use regular instant

chocolate pudding. Other pudding flavors like vanilla, butterscotch, or even pistachio could be fun variations!

Milk (for pudding): Use cold milk as specified on your pudding package. Whole milk typically yields a creamier result.

Crushed Cookies/Crackers: Crushed Oreos give a decadent chocolatey base, while graham crackers offer a more classic crust flavor. You can use a food processor for a fine crumb or crush them in a bag with a rolling pin.

Optional Add-ins: Feel free to sprinkle a layer of chopped nuts (like pecans or walnuts), shredded coconut, or even mini marshmallows between layers for added texture and flavor.

Instructions:

Prepare the Cream Cheese Base: In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese with the granulated sugar and vanilla extract until the mixture is light, fluffy, and completely smooth, with no lumps of cream cheese remaining.

Gently fold in the thawed Cool Whip (or homemade whipped cream) into the cream cheese mixture until just combined. Be careful not to overmix, as you want to maintain the airy texture. Set aside.

Prepare the Chocolate Pudding: In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the instant chocolate fudge pudding mix and cold milk for about 2 minutes, or until the mixture begins to thicken. Let it sit for 5 minutes to fully set.

Assemble Layers in a Bowl: Choose a clear serving bowl (a trifle bowl, glass salad bowl, or even individual parfait glasses work beautifully to show off the layers). **Layer 1 (Optional Crunch):** If using, spread about half of the crushed Oreos or graham crackers evenly over the bottom of your serving bowl.

Layer 2 (Cream Cheese): Carefully spoon and spread half of the creamy cream cheese mixture over the cookie crumb layer (or directly onto the bottom of the bowl if skipping the crumb).

Layer 3 (Chocolate Pudding): Spoon half of the thickened chocolate pudding over the cream cheese layer, gently spreading it to form an even layer.

Repeat Layers: Repeat with the remaining half of the crushed cookies (if using), then the remaining cream cheese mixture, and finally, the rest of the chocolate pudding.

Chill: Cover the bowl loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight. This chilling time is crucial for the layers to set properly and for the flavors to meld beautifully.

Garnish & Serve: Just before serving, remove from the refrigerator. Garnish with your chosen toppings

like chocolate shavings, mini chocolate chips, cocoa powder, extra whipped cream, or fresh berries.

Tips for Success:

Softened Cream Cheese is Key: Lumps in the cream cheese layer are easily avoided by ensuring it's at true room temperature before mixing.

Chill Time is Crucial: Don't rush the chilling!

This allows the pudding to set, the cream cheese layer to firm up, and all the flavors to deepen and meld.

Gentle Folding: When incorporating the Cool Whip, fold it in gently to keep the mixture light and airy.

Layer Evenly: Take a moment to spread each layer carefully for a beautiful presentation, especially in a clear bowl.

Fresh Garnishes: Garnish just before serving for the freshest look and best texture.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Storage and Leftover Tips:

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the : Cream Cheese Base: In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese with the granulated sugar and vanilla extract until the mixture is light, fluffy, and completely smooth, with no lumps of cream cheese remaining.
2. Gently fold in the thawed : Cool Whip (or homemade whipped cream) into the cream cheese mixture until just combined. Be careful not to overmix, as you want to maintain the airy texture. Set aside.
3. Prepare the : Chocolate Pudding: In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the instant chocolate fudge pudding mix and cold milk for about 2 minutes, or until the mixture begins to thicken. Let it sit for 5 minutes to fully set.
4. Assemble : Layers in a Bowl: Choose a clear serving bowl (a trifle bowl, glass salad bowl, or even individual parfait glasses work beautifully to show off the layers). Layer 1 (Optional Crunch): If using, spread about half of the crushed Oreos or graham crackers evenly over the bottom of your serving bowl.
5. Layer 2 (Cream Cheese): Carefully spoon and spread half of the creamy cream cheese mixture over the cookie crumb layer (or directly onto the bottom of the bowl if skipping the crumb).
6. Layer 3 (Chocolate Pudding): Spoon half of the thickened chocolate pudding over the cream cheese layer, gently spreading it to form an even layer.
7. Repeat : Layers: Repeat with the remaining half of the crushed cookies (if using), then the remaining cream cheese mixture, and finally, the rest of the chocolate pudding.

8. Chill: Cover the bowl loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight. This chilling time is crucial for the layers to set properly and for the flavors to meld beautifully.
9. Garnish & : Serve: Just before serving, remove from the refrigerator. Garnish with your chosen toppings like chocolate shavings, mini chocolate chips, cocoa powder, extra whipped cream, or fresh berries.
10. Serve cold and prepare for a taste of : Heaven in a Bowl!
11. Tips for Success: Softened Cream Cheese is Key: Lumps in the cream cheese layer are easily avoided by ensuring it's at true room temperature before mixing.
12. Chill : Time is Crucial: Don't rush the chilling! This allows the pudding to set, the cream cheese layer to firm up, and all the flavors to deepen and meld.
13. Gentle : Folding: When incorporating the Cool Whip, fold it in gently to keep the mixture light and airy.
14. Layer : Evenly: Take a moment to spread each layer carefully for a beautiful presentation, especially in a clear bowl.
15. Fresh : Garnishes: Garnish just before serving for the freshest look and best texture.
16. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: Heaven in a Bowl is a fantastic standalone dessert that's perfect for potlucks, family dinners, holiday gatherings, or any time you need a crowd-pleasing sweet treat. Its rich flavors mean it pairs well with a simple cup of coffee or a glass of cold milk. For other satisfyingly sweet no-bake options, check out my [This Easy Ice Cream Sandwich Cake Is My Favorite No-Bake Summer Dessert](#) or [This Brownie Batter Dip Is My Favorite No-Bake Dessert For Instant Chocolate Cravings](#).
17. Storage and Leftover Tips: Store any leftover Heaven in a Bowl, covered tightly with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. While the cookie layer might soften slightly over time, the dessert will still be delicious. It does not freeze well due to the textures of the cream cheese and pudding layers.
18. More Recipes You Will Love: If you love rich, comforting, and often chocolatey desserts, here are some other Chefmaniac favorites:
19. For another rich, decadent treat that combines two classics, you'll love [These Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Brownie Bombs Are My Favorite Sweet Obsession](#).
20. If you're a fan of classic desserts, my : [The Best Peanut Butter Brownies I've Ever Made And I've Made A Lot](#) are a must-try.
21. And for another delightful no-bake treat that's perfect for a crowd, check out [This Big Family Banana Pudding Is My Favorite Classic Dessert To Feed A Crowd](#).
22. Final Thoughts: Heaven in a Bowl truly lives up to its name, offering a blissful combination of creamy, chocolatey, and often crunchy layers that are simply irresistible. It's a testament to the fact that you don't need to bake to create a show-stopping dessert that will delight everyone. Simple to assemble and

utterly delicious, this is one bowl you'll want to dive into again and again!

- 23.** What's your favorite no-bake dessert to make for a crowd? Share your ideas in the comments below, and don't forget to follow [Chefmaniac.com](https://chefmaniac.com) for more delicious recipes!

SWAPS & NOTES

Cream Cheese: Ensure your cream cheese is completely softened to room temperature for a smooth, lump-free base.

Full-fat cream cheese offers the best richness.

Cool Whip: This provides a light, airy texture and good stability.

If you prefer homemade, whip 1 cup of heavy cream with 2-3 tablespoons of powdered sugar until stiff peaks form to yield about 2 cups.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Softened Cream Cheese is Key: Lumps in the cream cheese layer are easily avoided by ensuring it's at true room temperature before mixing.

Chill Time is Crucial: Don't rush the chilling!

This allows the pudding to set, the cream cheese layer to firm up, and all the flavors to deepen and meld.

Gentle Folding: When incorporating the Cool Whip, fold it in gently to keep the mixture light and airy.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/heaven-in-a-bowl-the-ultimate-no-bake-layered-dessert/>