

Easy Cranberry Cheesecake Bars with a Graham Cracker Crust

2 cups graham cracker crumbs:



OVEN
350°F

TIME
10 min

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INGREDIENTS

The Crust:

2 cups graham cracker crumbs: Approximately 10-12 full sheets.

... cup granulated sugar: To help the crust caramelize.

‰ teaspoon ground cinnamon: An optional touch that adds warmth.

‰ cup unsalted butter: Melted to bind the crumbs together.

The Cheesecake Filling:

16 ounces (450 g) cream cheese: Must be room temperature for a lump-free batter.

‰ cup granulated sugar: For sweetness.

2 large eggs: Room temperature to ensure even emulsification.

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract: For that classic bakery aroma.

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour: This helps prevent the bars from cracking and gives them a sturdy "clean cut" texture.

The Cranberry Swirl:

1‰ cups fresh cranberries: Frozen will also work!

‰ cup granulated sugar: To balance the tartness.

2 tablespoons water & 1 tablespoon orange juice: Citrus and cranberry are a match made in heaven.

Zest of 1 orange: For a bright, aromatic pop.

1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon

water: To create a thick, glossy slurry.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the Oven and Pan: Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a 9x13-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Pro tip: Leave an overhang on the sides so you can lift the entire block of bars out later for perfect slicing. Lightly grease the paper.
2. Make the Crust: In a medium bowl, combine crumbs, sugar, and cinnamon. Pour in the melted butter and stir until it looks like wet sand. Press this firmly into the pan. Bake for 8-10 minutes until golden. Let it cool while you prep the rest.
3. Make the Cranberry Swirl: In a small saucepan, combine cranberries, sugar, water, juice, and zest. Simmer until the berries burst (usually about 7-8 minutes). Stir in your cornstarch slurry and simmer for another minute until thickened. Let this cool down-you don't want to pour boiling hot jam onto raw cheesecake batter!
4. Prepare the Cheesecake Filling: Beat the softened cream cheese for 2 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the sugar, then the eggs one at a time. Finish with vanilla and flour. Do not overmix once the eggs are in, or you'll incorporate too much air, which causes bubbles.
5. Assemble and Swirl: Pour the cheesecake batter over the crust. Drop spoonfuls of the cranberry sauce on top. Using a knife or a skewer, gently swirl the red sauce into the white batter. Don't over-swirl, or it will just turn pink-you want distinct marbled lines!
6. Bake and Chill: Bake for 30-35 minutes. The edges should be set, but the center should still have a slight "jiggle." Turn off the oven, crack the door, and let it sit for 10 minutes. Then, move it to the

counter to cool completely before refrigerating for at least 2 hours (or overnight).

SWAPS & NOTES

The Fruit: If cranberries are out of season, you can use frozen berries or even swap the swirl for a pumpkin mixture similar to what I use in this pumpkin delight dessert.

The Crust: Try using ginger snaps instead of graham crackers for a spicy, festive twist that pairs beautifully with the orange zest.

Dairy-Free: While I prefer the richness of full-fat cream cheese, you can use a high-quality plant-based cream cheese alternative.

Just ensure it is at room temperature before mixing.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Room Temperature is Key: I cannot stress this enough!

Cold cream cheese will result in tiny white lumps that never go away.

The Clean Cut: For those perfect, professional squares, dip a sharp knife in hot water and wipe it clean between every single cut.

The "Jiggle" Test: Don't wait for the center to be firm.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-cranberry-cheesecake-bars-with-a-graham-cracker-crust/>