

DEEANN'S CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE

This is one of the first things Deeann made for me after we met, and it helped me realize that she was truly wonderful and most definitely a keeper!

CHOCOLATE CRUMB CRUST:

1 ½ cups Nilla Wafers
½ cup Powdered Sugar
1/3 cup Hershey's Cocoa
1/3 cup Butter, melted

Crush the wafers into crumbs using a large zip lock bag and a rolling pin. Add powdered sugar and cocoa and mix well. Add melted butter and mix well. Crumbs should stick together when squeezed. If they don't, melt another Tablespoon of butter and mix well.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Pour the crust mixture into spring form pan, and press firmly to the bottom. Place pan in oven for 10 minutes, then remove and allow to cool on a wire rack.

FILLING:

2 cups (12 ounce package) semi-sweet Chocolate Chips
3 packages Cream Cheese, softened (8 ounces each)
1 can Sweetened Condensed Milk (14 ounce)
4 Eggs
2 teaspoons Vanilla

Heat the oven to 300 degrees.

In a heavy saucepan over very low heat, melt the chips stirring constantly, or melt in a microwave, one minute at a time, stirring after each minute until they are melted (be careful, they burn easily).

In a large mixer bowl, beat the cheese until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating until just incorporated.

Gradually beat in the sweetened condensed milk until smooth. Add the melted chips and the vanilla.

Mix well.

Pour the filling into the prepared crust and bake for 65 minutes or until center is just set. Place on wire rack and allow it to cool to room temperature. Place in refrigerator and chill for at least 4 hours before serving.