

**Jonathan's Award Winning Burnt Basque Cheesecake
(with Apricot and Sultana topping)**

**Winner of The Blackheath and Greenwich WI's Perpetual Trophy for
Excellence in Baking 2024**

Ingredients

For the cheesecake

900g full fat cream cheese
250g caster sugar
300ml sour cream
4 large eggs
60g plain flour
2 tsp vanilla essence
1/2 tsp salt

For the topping

2 tins of apricot halves in juice
75g sultanas
75g flaked almonds

Method

1. Heat the oven to 240C / 220C fan.
2. Take a 9" spring form cake tin and line with a large square of greaseproof paper. Don't cut / trim the paper - fold it in to fit the tin (the folds in the paper help to give the cheesecake its characteristic colouring).
3. Beat together the cream cheese and sugar for 2-3 minutes. The sugar needs to have completely dissolved, otherwise the cheesecake will be grainy.
4. Add the remaining ingredients (sifting in the flour) and mix until combined.
5. Pour through a sieve - to ensure you don't get lumps - into the lined cake tin.
6. Take a small, shallow roasting tin. Add the sultanas. Then pour over the apricot halves and juice. The sultanas need to be covered by the apricots, or they will burn during cooking.
7. Put the cheesecake and the apricots / sultanas in the oven. Middle shelf for the cheesecake, shelf below for the apricots / sultanas.
8. Bake for 30 minutes. The cheesecake will rise like a souffle and the top will blacken. It will be very, very wobbly. But this is just right - remove and leave to cool in the tin. It will sink down and firm up.
9. At the same time as you remove the cheesecake from the oven, remove the apricots / sultanas. The juice will have evaporated and the apricots should be nicely singed. Again, leave to cool in the roasting tin.
10. Gently toast the flaked almonds in a frying pan for 1-2 minutes. No oil is needed - keep the pan dry. The almonds will burn very easily - be careful.
11. Once everything is cool, you are ready to assemble. Spoon the apricots / sultanas over the cheesecake to decorate. Take care with the apricots, as it will be easy to turn them to mush. Sprinkle over the toasted flaked almonds.
12. Remove the springform side from the tin, peel back the greaseproof paper and enjoy. The cheesecake will keep for a couple of days in the fridge.