

carlo's choice of chocolate chip[†] cheesecake



Chocolate chips.

Another thing we Americans take for granted. Here they even come in two sizes, regular and mini, but in Europe they don't come in any size. There aren't any.

(American military bases and diplomatic commissaries excluded.)

No chocolate chip cookies!

No chocolate chip cheesecake!

What a drag.

† not available to the general public
in many parts of the world

Carlo lives in Rome and is not a diplomat, military person or even American. But he has tasted

chocolate chip cheesecake in America. And he wants more. This could have been a problem except for one thing. Marzia, an airline stewardess who occasionally stops over in chip producing nations, and happens to be married to Carlo. What luck. Next time she brings home the goods, guy, go for it!

THE CRUST

choice one: 1 1/2 cups finely crushed creme-filled chocolate sandwich cookies* (about 18 cookies)

1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted

choice two: 1 1/2 cups chocolate wafer cookie crumbs (about 24 cookies)

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted

choice three: 3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs**

1/2 cup ground walnuts

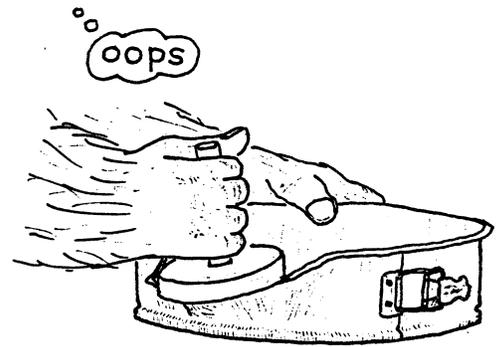
3 tablespoons brown sugar

1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted

* OREO[®]S !! **

** not available to the general public in Europe (remind Marzia)

Crushed, ground or crumbed ingredients not found naturally in such a state must be persuaded to achieve such a state with the help and guidance of an experienced blender. Mix together dry ingredients with melted butter or margarine and press onto bottom of 9 inch (or near metric equivalent) springform pan. Set aside. (We have found a smooth meat flattener ideal for crumb pressing, except when crumbs stick to the flattener, in which case it is not so ideal. Other problems may arise. See diagram.)



THE FILLING

choice one: 3 8oz packages (681.8g) cream cheese, softened
 1 14oz (397.7g) can sweetened condensed milk
 3 eggs
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 1 cup mini chocolate chips
 1 teaspoon flour
 still no bananas

choice two: 2 8oz packages (454.4) cream cheese, softened
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream ***
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 4 eggs
 1 cup mini chocolate chips

Do a standard fluff, add and smooth number on the ingredients preceding the chips. (Beat the cheese until fluffy and add in the rest successively beating until smooth.) Take half the chips and if in the mood, toss them with the flour before adding to the batter. Pour batter into crusted (not crushed) pan and sprinkle the remaining chips evenly on top. (This is not the topping, however.) We have found that the inside chips drop to the crust no matter how you try to trick them, with or without flour. Crafty little buggers.

*** not available to the general public in Italy (try nearby countries?)

BAKING

Oh, did we forget to tell you to preheat the oven?

filling choice one: 300°F (150°C) for 1 hour. Use the standard springback cake test to be sure (done if cake springs back when *lightly* touched). Avoid the chips when touching. They will stick on not spring back.

filling choice two: 325°F (165°C) for 40 minutes. use the jiggling center cake test to be sure (done if 3 inch = 7.62 cm circle in center jiggles under *light* shaking).

TOPPING

choice one: ½ pint = 1 cup sour cream ***
 ½ cup sugar
 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla

choice two: no topping
 no possibly unavailable ingredients

Mix together ingredients (if any) until smooth. 20 minutes after removing cake from oven and placing on cooling rack, it will have relaxed a bit. Don't allow it to get too comfortable. Slap with topping (if any) and jam into preheated 475°F (245°C) oven for 5 minutes. Remove and chill. For topping choice two pass this step and go directly to chill after relax. Chill means clearing a place on one of the refrigerator racks and inserting the cake. If not the top rack, cover with something to keep stuff from falling in, usually considered undesirable. Avoid plastic wrap. It will wet your cake. Best if chilled overnight, at least.

choice one topping option: Any time before serving, sprinkle evenly with maybe ¼ cup ground walnuts. Or sprinkle unevenly (like avoiding part of the cake) to leave a no nut option. Some people just don't like nuts.

Note to Carlo. Keep that marriage together or this cake is memory city.