

2024 PA Preferred Junior Baking Contest Recipes:

1st place, Kamea Pierce, Franklin County - Summer Berry Lemon Cheesecake Bars

Berry Swirl (Berry Puree)

3 cups mixed berries (1 cup each strawberries, blueberries and raspberries)

¾ cup sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

Crust

15 whole graham crackers, finely crushed

1 stick butter, melted

¼ cup sugar

Cheesecake Filling

16 ounces cream cheese, softened

1 ½ cup sugar

2 tsp vanilla

¼ cup sour cream

1 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp lemon zest

3 large eggs

Instructions

Berry Puree

In a saucepan, simmer berries, sugar and lemon juice on medium until berries are softened and can be smashed. Stir occasionally.

Use an immersion blender to blend softened berries into a puree. Chill in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Crust

In a food processor, pulse graham crackers until they resemble a fine crumb.

In a bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and sugar until crumbs are moist.

Press the graham cracker mixture into the bottom of a greased 9x13 baking dish.

Cheesecake Filling

In a large mixing bowl, combine softened cream cheese, sugar and vanilla with a hand mixer on medium speed until smooth with no visible lumps.

Add sour cream and beat until combined, followed by 3 eggs, adding one at a time until all are completely combined.

Pour half of the cheesecake filling over the graham cracker crust.

Add half of the cooled berry puree on top of cheesecake filling by scattering dollops throughout and swirl with a toothpick or skewer.

Top with remaining cream cheese mixture, along with remaining berry puree, repeating the process by adding dollops and swirling.

Bake at 325 degrees F for about an hour.

Remove from oven and let sit on top of stove for about an hour. Transfer to refrigerator to chill for another 2 hours, preferably overnight.

Once bars are completely chilled, cut and serve.

Garnish with fresh mint leaves or a swirly candied lemon peel or serve plain.

Keep stored covered in refrigerator for up to 5 days.

2nd place, Aidan Dull, Blair County - Buckeye Brownies

For the Brownies:

1/3 cup cocoa powder

1 ½ teaspoons instant coffee powder

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water

2 ounces unsweetened chocolate

1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. vanilla extract

4 Tbs. Vale Wood Farms butter melted

½ cup plus 2 Tbs vegetable oil

2 local eggs + 2 yolks

2 ½ cups sugar

¾ tsp. salt

For the Peanut Butter Filling:

¾ cup (193.5 g) creamy peanut butter

½ cup (113.5 g) butter

Pinch salt

2 Tbs. Galliker's whole milk

2 ¼ cups powdered sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

For the Chocolate Peanut Butter Glaze:

1½ cups (270 g) milk chocolate chips

1/3 cup (86 g) creamy peanut butter

instructions:

Make the Brownies: Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9x13-inch baking pan with foil, leaving about a one-inch overhang on all sides. Spray with nonstick cooking spray.

Whisk cocoa, coffee powder, and boiling water together in large bowl until smooth. Add unsweetened chocolate and whisk until chocolate is melted. Whisk in melted butter and oil.

Add eggs, yolks, and vanilla whisk until smooth. Whisk in sugar until blended. Add flour and salt and mix until combined.

Scrape batter into prepared pan and bake 30-35 minutes. Transfer pan to wire rack and cool 1 ½ hrs.

Make the peanut butter filling: beat together peanut butter, butter and salt until smooth & creamy. Reduce speed to low and alternate adding powdered sugar and milk, mixing to combine after each addition. Add vanilla and beat until smooth and creamy. Spread the peanut butter mixture evenly over cooled brownie layer.

Make the chocolate-peanut butter glaze: Melt together the chocolate chips and peanut butter in microwave until melted and smooth. Pour the glaze over the peanut butter layer and spread with a spatula. Refrigerate at least 30 min or until set. Cut into small squares and serve. Brownies can be stored at room temperature for up to 5 days.

3rd place, Lexi Fox, Washington County - Caramel Apple Bars

INGREDIENTS

For Crust:

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter

1 egg

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla^[SEP]

For Caramel Sauce^[SEP]:

$\frac{1}{2}$ bag individually wrapped caramels, unwrapped

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla^[SEP]

For Caramel Cream:

16 oz (2 blocks) cream cheese

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups powder sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup caramel sauce

2 teaspoons vanilla

8 oz Cool Whip^[SEP]

For Apple Topping:

6-8 apples, peeled and diced

5 tablespoons brown sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1-2 tablespoons cornstarch

For Icing:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shortening

½ cup butter

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup milk

2 teaspoons vanilla

Instructions

Peel and core apples then dice into small chunks.

In a small bowl, combine apples, sugar, cinnamon and cornstarch. Mix well. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350°

In a medium bowl, whisk together ingredients for the crust: flour, baking powder, sugar, salt. Add butter, egg and vanilla. Mix well until dough forms a ball.

Evenly press dough into bottom of greased 9×13 pan. Bake crust for 10-15 minutes, until the edges start to brown. Set aside to cool completely.

In a saucepan over low/medium heat, combine unwrapped caramels, milk and vanilla. Stir constantly until caramels are completely melted. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar for 1-2 minutes until smooth. Add caramel sauce and vanilla and beat for another minute. Fold in Cool Whip with spatula until smooth. Spread caramel cream evenly over cooled crust. Refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours.

Heat apple mixture in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook apples until they are soft and the juice thickens. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

Make the icing by combining shortening, butter, sugar, milk and vanilla in a large bowl. Beat icing on medium speed for at least 8-10 minutes or until thick.

When the caramel cream is finished chilling, spread the apple topping over it. Cut into squares. Garnish each bar with icing using a piping bag and your tip of choice. Drizzle remaining caramel sauce over icing. Keep refrigerated!

4th place, Reese Patterson, Centre County - Reese's Lemon Bars

Ingredients

Bottom crust:

½ cup light brown sugar

½ cup sugar

2 1/3 cups flour

¾ tsp salt

¼ tsp baking powder

12 Tbsp unsalted butter melted yet cooled down

Lemon Filling:

4 Large Eggs

2 Tbsp heavy whipping cream

1/8 tsp salt

2/3 cup lemon juice

14 oz sweetened condensed milk

Topping:

Optional: 2 tsp powder sugar

Instructions

Bottom Crust:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 8x8 baking dish with parchment paper.

Stir the sugars, flour, salt and baking powder together. Pour the butter on top of mixture and mash together with a fork until it is all mixed and the mixture is moistened.

Press about 2/3 of the crumb mixture into the bottom of your pan. Bake the crust for 15 minutes until it is slightly brown.

Lemon Filling:

Mix together the eggs, heavy whipping cream, salt, lemon juice and condensed milk until it is all blended together.

Pour the mixture on the crust. Take the remaining crumb mixture and place on top of the lemon filling.

Bake at 350F until the top is turning brown about 15 minutes. The edges should be set at this point.

Let cool and then place in fridge for 3 hours before eating.

Optional: Add 2 tsp of powder sugar dusting at the top of the crumb (optional)

5th place, Cameron Zook, Lancaster County - Cam's Lemon Macarons

Servings: 48 macarons

Prep time: 45 minutes

Rest time: about an hour

Cook time: 12 minutes

Macaron Shells:

275 grams almond flour

250 grams powdered sugar

210 grams PA preferred egg whites (Weis brand Grade A large eggs)

210 grams cane sugar

Food coloring

Macaron Filling:

1 ½ sticks unsalted butter

3 cups powdered sugar 2 tsp lemon extract ^[SEP] Pinch of salt

2 tsp lemon extract

Pinch of salt

2 tbsp milk

Lemon curd (in the center)

Instructions:

Prepare baking sheets with silicon baking mats or line with parchment paper.

Put the almond flour & powdered sugar into a bowl and whisk. Sift the mixture 2 times.

Whisk the egg whites in a stand mixer on medium low speed until foamy. Add cream of tartar and whisk again on medium speed until soft peaks form. Reduce speed to medium low and add the sugar. After about 15 seconds, increase the speed to high and whisk until really stiff peaks form.

Once stiff peaks have formed, sift ½ of the dry mixture over the egg whites and fold. ^[SEP] After combined, add the food coloring. Repeat until the mixture is combined and ribbons down from the spatula.

Put the batter in a pastry bag with a ½ inch plain round tip

Pipe mixture onto prepared baking sheets in 2-inch circles, 1 inch apart. Tap the sheets on a surface until air bubbles are released. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Let the macarons sit at room temperature until dry to touch.

Bake 1 sheet at a time for 12 minutes, rotating halfway through. While macaron shells are cooling, make the filling.

Making the filling:

Beat the butter with the paddle attachment until light and fluffy. Add the powdered sugar and pulse until combined. Add the rest of the filling ingredients and beat for at least 5 minutes on high speed until ¹_{SEP}the filling is fluffy.

Put into a piping bag and pipe onto the cooled macaron shells. Pipe lemon curd in center of each macron and assemble the macarons.