

Prep Time: 2 ½ hours
Total Time: 6 ¼ hours
Yield: 16 servings

CHEEZ-IT YOURSELF

CARAMEL CRUMBLE CAKE

Sweet, salty and savory—this cake has it all!


by Stephanie Izard

INGREDIENTS

Cheez-It Crumble

- 1 box (12.4 oz.) **Cheez-It**® Original
- ½ cup (1 stick; 4 oz.) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar

The Cake

- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 eggs
- 2 ½ cups sifted pastry flour or cake flour
- 3 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups buttermilk
- 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

Cheez-It Crumble

1. Freeze **Cheez-It**® Original crackers at least 1 hour. Remove from freezer. Place in blender container or food processor bowl. Cover and process until very fine crumbs form. Repeat processing, if needed, to make crumbs as fine as possible. Remove and discard any large pieces.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 15 x 10 x 1-inch baking sheet with foil.
3. In mixer bowl combine ½ cup of the **Cheez-It**® crumbs (reserve remaining crumbs for cake), ½ cup butter, all-purpose flour and 3 tablespoons sugar. Beat with paddle attachment of electric mixer on medium speed until pieces are the size of peas. Spread on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown, stirring every 10 minutes. Cool completely, stirring to break up any large pieces.

The Cake

1. For cake, reduce oven temperature to 325°F. Grease and flour two 8-inch round cake pans with 2-inch-high sides. Line bottoms of pans with circles of parchment paper. Set aside.
2. In large mixer bowl combine 1 ½ cups sugar and vegetable oil. Beat with wire whisk attachment of electric mixer on medium speed until combined. Add sour cream. Beat until mixed. Add eggs, one at a time, beating on high speed after each addition until light and fluffy.
3. Add reserved **Cheez-It**® crumbs, pastry flour, baking soda and ¾ teaspoon salt. Mix on low speed just until combined.
4. In medium saucepan combine buttermilk and shredded cheese. Cook and whisk over medium heat until cheese is softened. Blend with immersion blender until smooth. (Or, pour buttermilk-cheese mixture into blender or food processor container. Carefully process with feeder cap removed until smooth.) Stir in 1 tablespoon vanilla.
5. With mixer on medium-low speed, gradually add buttermilk mixture to beaten cake mixture, beating just until combined. Pour into prepared cake pans. Bake about 40 minutes or until toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Transfer to wire cooling rack.
6. Cool cake layers in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans. Remove parchment paper from bottoms of cake layers. Cool completely.

*Recipe Note:

Two 16-ounce cans purchased vanilla frosting may be substituted for the Homemade Buttercream Frosting and 1 cup purchased caramel ice cream topping may be substituted for the Homemade Caramel Sauce on the following page.

INGREDIENTS

Homemade Caramel Sauce*

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Homemade Buttercream Frosting*

- 5 egg whites
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks; 8 oz.) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces and softened
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla
- ⅛ teaspoon salt

Nutrition Facts	
16 servings per container	
Serving size	1 slice (197g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	700
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 36g	46%
Saturated Fat 12g	60%
Trans Fat 0.5g	
Cholesterol 65mg	22%
Sodium 700mg	30%
Total Carbohydrate 83g	30%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 49g	
Includes 47g Added Sugars	94%
Protein 12g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 176mg	15%
Iron 3mg	15%
Potassium 206mg	4%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Contains: Milk, Gluten, Egg and Soy
May contain trace amount of Peanut, Tree Nut, Seeds

DIRECTIONS

Homemade Caramel Sauce*

1. In small saucepan heat cream just until warm and small bubbles begin to form around edges. Remove from heat. Cover to keep warm. Set aside.
2. Place water in 2-quart saucepan with heavy bottom. Pour 1 cup sugar and ⅛ teaspoon salt into the center of the pan, forming a low mound. Do not stir. Pat the mound down until it is evenly moistened. Any sugar touching sides of the pan should be below the water line. Cover and cook over medium heat, without stirring, until sugar dissolves and syrup looks clear.
3. Uncover the saucepan and continue to cook sugar mixture over medium heat until it turns light amber color. Swirl pan gently (instead of stirring) if mixture begins to color unevenly. Check the color frequently by using a bamboo skewer or toothpick to place a drop of syrup on a light-colored plate. As soon as the syrup is light amber, remove it from the heat.
4. Stand back to avoid splattering and gradually stir in warm cream and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Return to heat. Cook, stirring constantly, over low heat about 1 minute or until smooth. Remove from heat. Let stand for 5 minutes. Pour into heatproof bowl. Refrigerate about 1 hour or until cool.

Homemade Buttercream Frosting*

1. In top of double boiler or heat-proof pan that fits over top of medium saucepan, combine egg whites and 1 cup sugar. Place over boiling water (upper pan should not touch water). Cook, whisking constantly or beating with hand-held mixer, until instant read thermometer reads 160°F and sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from heat.
2. Pour warm egg white mixture into mixer bowl. Using electric mixer with whisk attachment, beat on medium-high speed until cool and stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Continue to beat on medium-high speed, adding butter, a few pieces at a time. Beat until butter is completely incorporated after each addition. (If the mixture deflates and looks curdled, keep beating until smooth. If the mixture looks soupy, refrigerate bowl for 20 minutes and beat again. You may need more than 1 session in the refrigerator.) Add 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla and ⅛ teaspoon salt. Beat until smooth and spreadable.

Assembly

1. Place one cake layer on cardboard disk or cake plate. Spoon about 1 cup of the buttercream on top. Drizzle with about ½ cup of the caramel sauce. Sprinkle with half of the **Cheez-It**® Crumbles. Top with second cake layer. Frost top and sides of cake with a thin layer of the buttercream. Refrigerate about 1 hour or until firm.
2. Spread remaining buttercream over top and sides of the cake. Drizzle with remaining caramel sauce. Sprinkle with remaining **Cheez-It**® Crumbles. Slice and serve. For longer storage, loosely cover and refrigerate. Let stand at room temperature for 2 hours before serving.

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