**Pecan Praline Cheesecake**

Decadent is the only word to describe this. The bourbon pairs perfectly with the praline, but it can be left out if you prefer. If praline paste is not available, Nutella is a wonderful substitute. The hazelnut flour can also be substituted with another nut flour.

**Crust**

Nut Crust made with pecans (page 17)

**Cheesecake**

2 pounds (908 g) cream cheese

1 cup (225 g) packed light brown sugar

2 tablespoons (16 g) hazelnut flour

5 large eggs

1 cup (240 g) praline paste

1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream

2 tablespoons (30 ml) bourbon

**Garnish**

1 cup (160 g) coarsely ground pecans

1 cup (100 g) pecan halves

To make the crust: Preheat the oven to 350oF (180oC, or gas mark 4). Follow the instructions on page 17 for the Nut Crust, using pecans. Let cool completely before adding the cheesecake batter.

To make the cheesecake: Lower the oven to 325oF (170oC, or gas mark 3). In the bowl of an electric mixer, using the paddle attachment, mix the cream cheese on low speed until softened, scraping down the sides of the bowl, underneath the paddle, and the paddle frequently with a rubber spatula, about 2 minutes. Add the brown sugar and hazelnut flour; continue mixing on low and scraping down the sides, bottom, and paddle until there are no visible lumps. Add the eggs, one at a time, and mix just until combined, about 10 seconds after each egg.

Stir in the praline paste, heavy cream, and bourbon. Prepare the springform pan for a water bath. Place the springform pan in a large cake pan or a roasting pan (one that is around the same height or lower than your springform pan). Pour the batter over the crust and level it with small offset spatula. Place in the oven and pour almost boiling water into the roasting pan (it should come up halfway around the sides of the pan). Bake for about 1 hour 30 minutes, until the cheesecake is firm around the edges, but still jiggly in the center (the jiggly part should be about the size of a quarter).

Remove from the oven and remove the cheesecake from the water bath. Remove the foil from the sides of the pan. Gently run a small sharp knife or small spatula around the edges of the pan to loosen the cheesecake from the sides. Allow to cool at room temperature. Place in the refrigerator for at least 8 hours (this will help the cheesecake set completely).

To unmold the cheesecake, gently run a small sharp knife or small spatula around the edges of the pan. Release the latch on the side of the pan and then lift the ring straight up.

To garnish: Decorate the sides of the cheesecake by pressing the ground nuts around the sides and then place the pecan halves around the top edge. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

*Yield: One 10-inch (25 cm) cheesecake*

**Bottom-Only Nut Crust**

2 cups (190 g) finely ground nuts (such as almonds, walnuts, or pecans; mix no more than two)

2 tablespoons (26 g) granulated or brown sugar

3 tablespoons (42 g) unsalted butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 350oF (180oC, or gas mark 4). In a medium bowl, combine the ground cookies or nuts and sugar. Add the butter and stir with a rubber spatula to combine, making sure all the butter is absorbed and the crumbs or nuts are evenly coated.

Place the mixture in a 10-inch (25 cm) springform pan. Using the palm of your hand or the bottom of a glass, press the mixture firmly into the bottom of the pan. For a bottom-and-sides crust, use the sides of a glass to press about half of the mixture into the sides of the pan.

Place the pan in the oven and bake for about 10 minutes, or until slightly firm. (The nut crust will be toasted to a golden brown and have a nutty aroma.) Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely, about 10 minutes.