



Photography Kenneth Theysen

SNICKERS CHEESECAKE

by Chef **Alwin van Belzen** of *Barefoot Restaurant*

The story behind this popular dessert from *Barefoot Restaurant* is simple. “We wanted to add an original cheesecake to the menu and we had some boxes of Snickers bars,” says Chef Alwin van Belzen.

“I thought that maybe I could do something with nuts and chocolate.” So he melted the Snickers, added home-made *dulce de leche* caramel, cream cheese and vanilla bean, folded in whipped cream and poured it over a base of crumbled, buttery Bastogne! – Dutch cookies that are a little lighter and more flavorful than Speculoos, he says.

The result speaks for itself: *Barefoot* sold more than 2,500 pieces of these no-bake cheesecakes last year. “People like the texture and flavor of the cheesecake, because you have a little bit of caramel and nuts. We serve it with hazelnut ice cream, so it combines well,” he adds. Though his wife is more of a dessert person, he says, he loves making sweets because he can be more creative than with savory dishes. Nonetheless, Alwin admits to occasionally sneaking some of this cheesecake when it’s freezing in the cooler. How could he not?



Cookie Jar

If you can’t find Bastogne!, use 3 cups (250 g) crushed Speculoos cookies, graham cracker crumbs or Oreo crumbs.

ALWIN VAN BELZEN

Chef – Barefoot Restaurant

Snickers Cheesecake

Serves 14

*(makes two 9" x 9" square pans
or one large 11" x 17" baking sheet)*

> CRUST

1 package **Bastogne!** cookies
2 tbsp. (20 g) butter

> FILLING

3 cups (700 g) cream cheese
2 cups (1/2 l) heavy cream, divided
1 can (400 g) condensed milk, caramelized
(see *dulce de leche* recipe)
1 1/2 cups (150 g) powdered sugar
1 tbsp. (7 g) powdered gelatin
6 Snickers bars, melted

1. For the crust, combine the cookies and melted butter in a food processor. Press into the bottoms of the pans.
2. Reserve 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the heavy cream in a small bowl and beat the remaining cream in a medium bowl on low speed for 1 minute. Increase the speed to high until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes ("We call it yogurt-thickness in Dutch," says Alwin).
3. In a small saucepan, bring the reserved 1/4 cup (60 ml) heavy cream to a boil. Remove from the heat and sprinkle the gelatin on top. Whisk to combine, then set the saucepan aside.
4. In a large bowl, combine the melted Snickers and softened cream cheese. Beat on low until combined.
5. Add the caramelized sweetened condensed milk (reserving a little for garnish), powdered sugar and the seeds of the vanilla bean. Beat until smooth.
6. Add the gelatin mixture and fold in the whipped cream.
7. Spread the filling evenly over the cookie base.
8. Freeze overnight or for a minimum of 4 hours.
9. To serve, slice the cheesecake and garnish with reserved caramel and a scoop of ice cream.



Home-made Dulce de Leche

Caramelized condensed milk is essentially *dulce de leche* caramel without the work. You can buy pre-made *dulce de leche*, but it's easy to make your own using Alwin's method: boil a can of sweetened condensed milk (don't open the can) in a pot of water for three hours. The increased pressure turns the milk into a sweet, milk caramel without you having to stir once. You don't even need to weigh down the can; it's heavy enough on its own. One caveat, though: "You have to keep enough water in the pot to keep the can submerged or it can explode," says Alwin, though a kitchen painted in caramel would not be the worst thing in the world.