



I've Got the Blues No More

WAS SITTING on a low couch letting my nail polish dry when the manicurist's next patron walked in. He was a nicely dressed gentleman. I commented that all three of us were wearing black shoes trimmed in white, but his trim was pristinely white, while Agata and I looked as if we had done a cross-country walk in coal mines. "How do you keep them so clean?" I inquired. "It's a secret". What? Did he walk on his hands?

He was telling Agata that each year he went to his friend's country house for a weekend, and that each time, he and his friend picked an ingredient which they used in this cooking competition they had. The ingredient had to be common and readily available at a local store or farmer's market. (No eye of newt or entrails of anything, I was thinking.)

The contest for 2021 was the best recipe using blueberries. "I have lots of blueberry recipes", I piped up, even though no one was talking to me, and I was obviously eavesdropping. The gentleman looked over. "Yeah? Like what?"

"I'll make a deal with you. If you win with my recipe, you have to tell me how to make my shoes look as pretty as yours." We couldn't shake hands; we both had fresh manicures. Agata was the witness. I went home and pored over my files and cookbooks. I was excited. I had skin in the game.

I offered a moist blueberry/lemon pound cake. Nope, too plain. Blueberry pie? Blueberry muffins? Nope, too common. Buckle? Crisp? Cobbler? No to all three. It had to be fancier, but easy to make. He settled on a lemon scented cheesecake with a blueberry compote. If you see me walking around town with blindingly white shoes, you'll know he won. U



PHOTO: GIRMANTAS URBONAS

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Creamy Lemon Scented Cheesecake with a Blueberry Compote

CRUST:

18 crisp gingersnap cookies
3-4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

FILLING:

2 pounds cream cheese, room temperature
1 cup mascarpone cheese, room temperature
1 ½ cups sugar
2 eggs
Zest of 2 lemons
3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

BLUEBERRY COMPOTE:

3 cups fresh blueberries
½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons water
2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS:

Make the crust: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the cookies in a food processor and process until finely ground. Remove the crumbs to a small bowl and stir in the melted butter until the crumbs are evenly moistened. Press crumbs onto the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake in the center of the oven until firm, about 8-10 minutes. Remove to a rack to cool. *Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees.

Meanwhile, make the filling: Combine the cream cheese, mascarpone, and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat on medium speed until smooth. Add the eggs, lemon zest and juice, and beat until combined. Pour the filling over the cooled crust.

Bake for about one hour, or until all but the very center of the cake is set. Remove from the oven and using a thin knife, cut around the edges of the cheesecake from the pan sides. (This helps prevent cracks from forming as the cake cools.) Cool at room temperature for 30 minutes, then cover and refrigerate for at least six hours or up to two days in advance.

While cake bakes, make the compote: In a small saucepan, combine the blueberries, sugar, water, and lemon juice. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens, about 5-8 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. (The blueberry compote may be made up to two days in advance.)

To serve, run a knife around the inside edge of the springform pan. Remove the sides of the pan and place the cake on a decorative serving platter. Cut into wedges and serve with the blueberry sauce.