

The Perfect Cheesecake Using Persimmon Puree

By Susie Iventosch



Persimmon Cheesecake

Photo Susie Iventosch

The Great Persimmon Harvest took place in Vacaville on Saturday, and The Urban Farmers of Lafayette was on hand to make sure the fruit from Charlotte Sturgeon's 810 fuyu persimmon trees did not go to waste like it did last year. Sturgeon's late husband planted the trees, and because she is not a farmer, she was unable to harvest some 100,000 pounds of fruit that rotted on the trees.

This year, in an effort to prevent that from happening again, she contacted The Urban Farmers, whose mission includes harvesting backyard fruit for the needy. Their primary focus is on hunger relief, so they joined forces with the Contra Costa-Solano Food Bank to mobilize hundreds of volunteers from local schools and other organizations to pick the fruit. (See the related article on page B5).

Although Sturgeon's persimmons are the fuyu variety, which are perfect for eating when barely soft, most baked goods that call for persimmons use the hachiya variety, which are best when super soft. The fruit is usually peeled and then pureed to add to the batter. The fuyus are more round and squat in shape, while the hachiyas are more elongated and almost heart-shaped.

My grandmother always seemed to know exactly when the hachiya persimmons from her backyard tree were perfectly ripe, yet not overly soft. She would peel them and toss them into a simple butter lettuce salad with a light vinaigrette. Delicious!

For more information on The Urban Farmers, please visit www.theurbanfarmers.org.

Persimmon Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 1 1/4 cup pecans
- 1 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling

- 2 eight-ounce packages cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup hachiya persimmon puree (peel persimmons before pureeing ... can blanch in boiling water to loosen skins)
- 3 eggs

Topping

- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

DIRECTIONS

Crust

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9-inch pie dish with butter or PAM.

Chop nuts in a food processor, until fine. Mix in a bowl with sugar, spices and melted butter. Pat into the bottom and sides of the pie dish.

Bake for 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and cool completely.

Filling

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese with both sugars, until smooth. Stir in persimmon puree. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each.

Pour filling into cooled pie shell and bake for approximately 30 minutes, or until mostly set, but still a little jiggy in the very center.

Topping

While the cake is baking, mix sour cream, sugar, spice and vanilla. As soon as you take the cheesecake out of the oven, spread this mixture over the top and continue to bake for another 10-12 minutes.

Remove cake from oven, cool to room temperature and refrigerate for several hours, or overnight before serving.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe can be found on our website:** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



THE APP RAP

By Eric Pawlakos

App: Swype by Nuance Communications Inc.
For: All Android phones and tablets
Price: \$0.99

Typing a few words in a text message is no big deal, and most smartphone keyboards are up to the task. But what if you are using word documents or a note-taking app and you need to type much more than a few words? That's where the Swype app comes in handy. Swype calls itself an 'intelligent' virtual keyboard that is better, faster and smarter than ordinary keyboards. It comes with many different features to assist the user in inputting words quickly and easily. For example, Swype gets its name from the fact that you can enter a word by swiping (tracing) the letters on the keyboard. Another really useful feature is Dragon Dictation, a highly sophisticated voice recognition program, which allows you to dictate text quickly, accurately, and hands-free. Swype also has a built in Smart Editor which has the ability to look at entire sentences you have entered and underline possible errors and suggestions for fixing them. The app allows you to go back and forth between three different key-

board designs, including a moveable keyboard, a full screen keyboard and one that is split-screen. The app also 'trains' itself to learn your unique vocabulary, enabling it to predict your words before you type them. If you use your smartphone to type more than just a few texts, you will love Swype. Unfortunately, this app is not compatible with the iPhone.



Alex Pawlakos enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time. He is a reporter on Express Yourself!(tm) Teen Radio. Alex is an economics major at UC Berkeley.

MOVIE REVIEW

"The Book Thief"

By Derek Zemrak



Liesel (Sophie Nélisse) reads to Max (Ben Schnetzer), who's hiding in her home. Photo Jules Heath TM and © 2013 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Not for sale or duplication.

"The Book Thief" is a film based on the international best-selling novel by Markus Zusak that tells the story of Liesel, an adopted girl in World War II Germany who is intrigued by the only book she brought with her to her new home. This book inspires her to begin collecting other books as she is taught to read by her adopted father and a young Jewish man the family is secretly hiding in their basement.

The talented cast makes "The Book Thief" a winner. The young gifted actress, Sophie Nélisse, impressively

portrays Liesel, who many of you will recall from her role in the 2012 Oscar nominated film "Monsieur Lazhar," which also won the 14th Annual California Independent Film Festival Best Picture. I predict many quality roles for Sophie as she continues to grow as an actor. Liesel's adopted parents are Hans (Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush) and Rosa (two-time Oscar nominee Emily Watson). Hans is a character that audiences will find pleasant, lovable and caring. Rosa on the other hand will have to grow on you, but give her some time. Both Rush

and Watson deliver Oscar nominated performances.

Although the movie takes place in a horrific time period in history, the screenplay adapted by Michael Petroni ("The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader") adds a touch of humor in the scenes between husband and wife, Hans and Rosa. Hans' quick wit will have you laughing as he reluctantly interacts with Rosa. The humor is well placed throughout the film.

Brian Percival, an Emmy Award winning director ("Downton Abbey") directed "The Book Thief" that has a TRT (total running time) of 2 hours and 11 minutes. It is rated PG13 for some violence and intense depictions of WWII.

Derek Zemrak is a film critic, film producer and founder of the California Independent Film Festival. You can follow Derek on Twitter @zemrak for the latest Hollywood news. Derek can be heard every Friday on KAHN 950AM on the Poppoff Show.

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