

Icebox Cake

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For the Filling:

- 1 (8 ounce) cream cheese, softened at room temperature
- 1 (14 ounce) sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 (5.1 ounce) box instant vanilla or lemon pudding
- 1 (8 ounce) tub Cool Whip, divided

For the Cake:

- 1 (14.4 ounce) box graham crackers
- 2 cups sliced strawberries
- 1 pint blueberries
- Chocolate syrup, to garnish

Set aside several blueberries and strawberries for garnish.

For the filling, cream the cream cheese until smooth. Add the sweetened condensed milk and blend.

In a mixer bowl, beat the milk and pudding on medium, until thickened, about 2 minutes. Fold into the cream cheese mixture along with 1/2 of the Cool Whip and gently blend. Set aside the remaining Cool Whip.

Add a thin layer of the pudding mixture to the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking dish.

Add one layer of graham cracker planks on top, trimming to fit as needed. Spread half of the remaining pudding mixture on top of the graham crackers, top with half of the sliced strawberries and half of the blueberries.

Add another layer of graham crackers, the remaining pudding, and the remaining half of the strawberries and blueberries.

Top with another layer of graham crackers and the reserved Cool Whip.

Refrigerate at least 4 hours or preferably, overnight, and keep refrigerated until ready to serve. Garnish with sliced strawberries and/or strawberry fan garnish, scatter blueberries on top and drizzle with chocolate syrup.

NOTES: Yes, it's absolutely okay to use lower sugar, sugar free, lower fat and/or fat free products, in fact everything in the dessert pictured, including the condensed milk, was made with a combination of them and it is still delicious!

Lemon Icebox Cake: Use lemon pudding and omit fruit. Add the juice of one lemon to the filling. Garnish with a little lemon zest before serving.

Banana Pudding Icebox Cake: Prepare as above, except layer in with two boxes vanilla wafers (like Nilla brand) instead of graham crackers and sliced bananas in place of the strawberries and blueberries. Garnish with crushed vanilla wafers and sliced banana instead of chocolate syrup, but only just before serving, if desired.

Banana Split Icebox Cake: Fold in one well-drained 8-ounce can of crushed pineapple with the pudding mixture. Prepare as above, except layer in sliced bananas in place of the blueberries.

Pineapple Nilla Wafer Cake: Prepare as above, except use a deep, 8 or 9-inch square dish, substitute one box vanilla wafers and fold in one (8 ounce) crushed pineapple, drained. Layer wafers and pudding in three layers ending with pudding. Refrigerate overnight. Before serving, top with reserved Cool Whip and garnish with 1/2 cup coconut, 1/4 cup chopped pecans and maraschino cherries, if desired. Double cookies and pineapple for 9 x 13-inch pan.

Eclair Icebox Cake: Omit the fruit and prepare with layers of graham crackers and filling, using vanilla pudding. Top with chocolate frosting.

Chocolate Banana Icebox Cake: Substitute sliced bananas for the fruit. Drizzle a thin layer of pudding mix on the bottom of pan, layer as above with graham crackers, pudding, bananas, chocolate sauce, graham crackers, pudding, bananas, chocolate. Top as above.

Peanut Butter Filling: Add one cup of creamy peanut butter to the pudding mixture, using vanilla pudding.

Peanut Butter Chocolate Icebox Cake: Prepare with chocolate pudding and Nutter Butter peanut butter cookies, or Nilla wafers with peanut butter filling above.

Toffee Icebox Cake: Prepare as above, except substitute chocolate graham crackers and chocolate pudding, omit fruit and garnish with two English toffee bars (like Heath candy bars), crushed.

Apple Cinnamon Icebox Cake: Prepare as above, except substitute cinnamon graham crackers and homemade or canned apple pie filling, coarsely chopped.

Milk and Cookies Icebox Cake: Prepare as above, except substitute soft chocolate chip cookies.