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Traditional Polish Cheesecake Recipe - Sernik

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This recipe for traditional Polish cheesecake or *sernik* (SEHRR-neek) has a sweet pastry crust and a [quark](#)¹ or [farmers cheese](#)² filling, known as *twaróg* (TVAH-rroog). It is one of the most common desserts in Polish restaurants and at home. Compare with this more modern [Polish cheesecake](#)³, which has a cookie crumb crust. I adapted this recipe from one given to me by the daughter of [Anna Chodan Krol](#)⁴ from Rudka, Poland. This [tea cookie recipe](#)⁵ also is from Anna Krol.

Here is a larger photo of [Traditional Polish Cheesecake](#)⁶

Prep Time: 45 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Yield: 12 servings Traditional Sernik

Ingredients:

- **Crust:**
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
 - 5 ounces (1 1/4 sticks) cold butter
 - 2 large egg yolks ([leftover egg white recipes](#)⁷)
 - 3 tablespoons sour cream
- **Filling:**
 - 5 ounces (1 stick + 2 tablespoons) softened butter
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 4 large eggs, separated
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 2 pounds dry curd cheese or *twaróg* or [quark cheese](#)⁸, passed through a sieve or processed in a blender until smooth

Preparation:

1. **To make the crust:** In a large bowl or food processor, mix flour, 1/2 cup sugar and baking powder. Cut in butter as for pie dough. In a separate bowl, mix together egg yolks and sour cream and add to flour, mixing only until combined. If dough is too dry, add an extra whole egg. If dough is too soft to roll, refrigerate for 1 hour. Lightly grease a 13x9-inch pan with butter. Roll dough large enough to line the pan and come up the sides. Fit into pan, making a crimped or rolled edge. (**Note:** If you have leftover dough, roll it into pencil shapes to decorate the top of the filled cheesecake.)



Traditional Polish Cheesecake or Sernik
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2. Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream 5 ounces butter with 2 cups sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in 4 egg yolks and vanilla until well incorporated. Thoroughly mix in the cheese. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold them into the cheese mixture. Pour filling into prepared pan. If you have leftover dough, roll into pencil shapes and lay them diagonally across the top of the cheesecake. Bake 50-60 minutes or until center is only slightly jiggly. Don't let the top brown. Let cool completely before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

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Jessey's modification:

- a) I used **plain regular yogurt with a pinch of baking powder** instead of sour cream, because for me the rest of the container of sour cream would go to waste. Seems to work well.
- b) After baking, it can be a bit runny/jiggly, so I make sure to refrigerate it for a few hours before serving - this works well.
- c) Also, for Cdn measurements: "2 pounds" of dry curd cheese comes out to **907 g**, and I used **Liberty Quark** cheese, also called Farmers Cheese I think. Each container has 375 g, so you need to buy 3 containers.