Renata Czelny-Kawa

CHEESECAKES

SWEET AND DRY



PSYCHOSKOK



Renata Czelny-Kawa
„Cheesecakes sweet and dry"

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"Who once dealt with fulfillment of desires,
will never feel entirely free of such responses"
(J. Harris: "Chocolat")

For My Husband





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SWEET CHEESECAKES

BAKED





















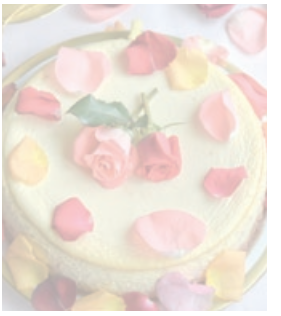












SWEET
CHEESECAKES
COLD





DRY
CHEESECAKES






I don't remember, when I baked my first cake. Neither do I remember which cake was the first one.

I have known, since I was a small girl, that I will bake something really good a certain day, although, only my beloved Grandparents really believed it would happen. My Mom seriously doubted I could achieve my attempts.

Being in the kitchen, I adored sitting at the table. I used to sit accompanied by a book, a cup of tea, further on - by my precious coffee. I loved to surveil how other people cooked and baked. I watched how work-worn hands of my Granny kneaded the dough for un apple-pie, I nodded appreciatively, observing how my Mom was decorating homemade layer cakes.

The fact that, on a certain day, I stood up off the table and I decided to act in the kitchen, without asking for advice and tips, resulted from (undoubtedly) I knew what was to be done after years of passive observations. When I heard around me: "in future in her home you will not find anything to eat", I knew I would reveal fun in joining tastes and colours of the food, I would work magic sweetness of desserts... I knew that and I wanted it very much!

Now I know one thing – I surprised all of them.






TASTES OF THE CHILDHOOD

Mom

For my Mom, everything always turned out right in the kitchen. Nothing was ever burnt, nothing went sour, nothing was unsuccessful. Never had she cooked anything distasteful. Never had she baked anything which was slack-baked cake or simply unsuccessful baking.

She always did everything quickly and practically. Without conviction that she indulged herself in culinary arts, without magic in the course of stirring inside the pot. Simply !

My Mom seems to remind me Her apple-pie, which was so full of apples, as a basket in the garden in the season of rich harvest from orchards. The apple-pie smelled of cinnamon, it was based on a delicate, fragile butter cake. From the hand of my Mom, delicious, prepared for Christmas, poppy seedcakes, honey cakes, colourful name-day biscuits or layer cakes were brought to life. Just layer cakes, close to apple-pies, were Her specialty. Delicious, beautifully decorated, sweet brilliancies.

And when I came back from school during the day when the certificates were given to the pupils, I knew there is something waiting for me in the fringe: marvelous, creamy delicious cake with biscuits, pudding and strawberries sunk in it... Such a sweet welcome to summer...

My Mom's heart wasn't in making small confectionery creations. She preferred baking something specific. That's why I don't have childhood memories connected with baking cookies by mother and daughter together, and there was no way to see the kitchen beautified by scattered flour!

I will probably always connote my Mom with a certain evening when my pregnancy didn't allow me to come from Cracow to visit her in Rzeszów. Having been sad, resentful and disappointed by this fact, in tears, I had opportunity to reveal Her peculiarity; nothing constituted an obstacle to stop Her – later that day, late in the evening, she appeared at the threshold of my home, literally two hours after my sloppy telephone, bringing my favourite food, which was still warm! Because Her duties called to return, the taxi-driver who was waiting for Her at my block of flats, before cooling the engine of his cab, was ordered to go back. This is my Mom!

Grandparents

I adored to hang out Saturdays at my Grandparents. I used to sit at the table, accompanied by an inherent book or a note-book. Granny was brewing the tea; after a while, something, which was sweet, appeared on the small plates. We talked about the passing week and plans for the next. Then, Grandpa took me for a stroll. We were buying my favourite magazine, often we had a short spin by the car. Just during one of them, I took a driver's place for the first time and the wheels were under my control. Early in the afternoon, when we were coming back, Granny was already preparing dinner. Sitting at the table, writing something, or reading, I watched each Her move. Simultaneously, Grandpa was repairing things, sticking together, installing something.

Such Saturdays were accumulating over the years...

Grandpa has taught me to ride a bike, and then to drive a car. He explained me many matters; no question was left without the answer. He assisted me faithfully to camouflage my child's pranks, keeping His mouth shut. When I became a growing up girl, having had His head down, He listened to my stories about my philandering... Granny had always supported me with just a kind word, she had always defended me. She had taken care of me, she had always encouraged me, during common shopping, to choose something from the shop.

I owe Her – my Granny – art of baking cheesecakes. Although she had always baked one and the same, traditional, with lack of new components share, its taste, of one and the same, caused that a cheesecake has conquered my heart for, probably, all my life.

It honoured all Her Name Days, every family celebration. Fluffy, lightly lemon, with raisins and orange peel, topped with chocolate icing and, sprinkled with grated coconut at last touch. That was the cheesecake!

It causes that if I am questioned on my favourite cake – I always reply: cheesecake!

It has caused that today I can pride myself on my own collection of recipes for the cheesecakes in various tastes and different types.

Thanks to it this book was born.

Help yourselves!





THE PLACE OF THE CHILDHOOD









Since my birthday I have lived in a city. At the beginning, for over 25 years, I lived in my beloved Rzeszów; currently, with my Husband and Daughter I dwell in Cracow.

As a little girl, I was very frequently spending my holidays in a family house of my Grandpa, in the country, near Krosno, in the Podkarpacie region. Precisely, this place, left the strongest trace in my heart and in my memories... Whenever I was sad and down, in my imagination I recalled the image of the old house near the forest, possessing expansive orchard, flowery garden, near the river. That place – surely simple for many people, constituted an idyll for me. Time flew in the simple way, but that place caused its flight seemed different. Matters which had different meaning in the city, lost their priorities, transferring them to the magic of serenity that governed around. Everything seemed so distant, remote and negligible. I got the impression that it was my hiding place to conceal me from the world. Up till now, I have taken with me there only the most important for me persons...

The staff of the past left fantabulous memories in my mind, which I scroll like in a colourful childish kaleidoscope.

I close my eyes and I can still see...

White cupboard in the kitchen, big, commemorative clock, round wooden table, which could never accommodate all of us, wild rose stems nearly knocking at bedroom's shutters. There are small piles of uncountable embroidered handkerchiefs and tapestries. There is an old coffer, standing in the hall, there is a century-old, great grandmother's sewing machine. Everything was exclusive, one of a kind.

I can see my Granny bustling around in the hall and in the kitchen, who is already preparing items necessary for afternoon dinner. The Great grandmother is sitting in the shadow, in her favourite place, on her favourite, well-worn, wooden chair. In her wrinkled like a raisin hand she is rotating neatly small apples, peeling them nimbly with a little knife. It means – an apple-pie will be created. I can see my Grandpa, being unable to sit still. For Him, there is always a heavy workload. I can see Him in the orchard, in a few seconds He is in the garden to take care of a certain plant. He is laying out a deckchair for me. My lazy forenoon. Then, we are walking towards the river, sit on the stones warmed by the sunshine, talk, take souvenir photos. Grandpa always talks about something. I ask Him, He tells, I admire to hear Him. When we are coming back along the road which smells the forest, I feel that

I don't want to be in another place... After crossing the threshold of the house I smell, at once, an aroma of apple-pie being baked. I am opening an orangeade in the glass bottle, which possesses my favourite taste of oranges. This is the taste from my childhood. One and unrepeatable. I am assisting Granny to lay the table. I put plates with gold and navy blue stripes, set cutlery exactly with wooden endings, bring glasses for currant compote. Granny opens the door and stands on the stairs. She calls Grandpa, we start sitting at the table. After a while, we are gathered at the table. Tomato soup with rice performed by my Granny.

Nobody ever could make the similar soup. Nobody. Main dish constitute cheese petty noodles in the shape of a neat diamond, spiced with butter. Everyone receives an ample portion. The compote smells of summer orchard. And the dessert is still warm. The apple-pie, by its intensive aroma, drills us in our noses. Granny dusts, served on the small plate, a piece of cake with powdered sugar. Everyone holds in his/her hand a small fork, everyone wants already to eat.

In the morning I usually go with Grandpa to Krosno or nearer to Zręcin, for shopping. We buy necessary products, including a big portion of fresh cottage cheese, sold as an immense cube. I know now, why it is needed. Granny will bake, beloved by all of us, cheesecake. When we return with required shopping, Granny is just soaking a pile of raisins in a small pot, and there is a small saucepan bubbling on the gas stove with finely chopped orange peel with sugar addition. It smells great and announces the cheesecake junket. I report myself to assist, at once. Granny does not recognize the mixer nor any other type of food processor. We pull out immortal immense makitra and wooden dough kneading truncheon. It is a kind of a "cheesecake mystery". At first, we grind butter for fluff, and then we add egg yolks with sugar, later – fragrant vanilla. Portion after portion, cottage cheese, which is ground smoothly, is added. The resulting mass becomes more and more tasty. Lemon juice, a drop of orange oil and aromatic orange peel. Magic. A spoon of semolina, whipped to stiff whites and, at the very end, drained raisins. Makitra is fulfilled to the brim with wonderful cheese mass. We both tilt the big container and carefully pour the mass into well-worn, rectangular baking mould. Granny is heats old oven. I hold mould with the cake in my both hands. We commonly slip

it into the stove. I watch the cake through oven pane. It is like fluff. Fragrant, creamy fluff. This is my Granny's cheesecake.

When, a day after, our family from Silesia arrives, the house gets noisy and cheerful. There are more and more deckchairs in the garden, a small table is completely filled with glasses and cups. Eating outside the house, having fresh air around, joined us all very much.

– Zosia, have you baked your excellent cheesecake? – asks my uncle from Silesia, which was my Granny's cuisine fun.

Before finishes his question, Granny serves, glass, decorative cake stand with pieces of cheesecake. It is deliciously decorated with chocolate icing and sprinkled with desiccated coconut.

After a while, friendly neighbours join us. There is lack of place for sitting so we leave our deckchairs and small chairs for our guests and we sit on the stairs of the house. Grandpa brews succeeding coffees and teas. Granny brings jugs with summer compote. Aunt Ania from Silesia lets her eyes follow everyone and everything, neatly holding thin cigarette in her fingers. Her grandsons changed the garden with the orchard into football playing field. We feel so familiarly...

I open my eyes and I can see... A photograph. There is a date in the back: July 1994. We all are sitting in the deckchairs, in front of the house, smiling cheerfully at the cheesecake treat... My memories immortalized on the colourful, glittering paper...

I close my eyes and I can still hear. Morning birds' concert, home-dwellers' talks, childish voices in the period of family reunions, laughter of the adults, their funny jokes, political bantering, a plane approaching situated nearby airport...

Generations passed the old, wooden house. A lot of time passed, but everything is still vivid in my memory. Vivid, because it is important. Because it is beautiful...

In 1999 I had to say goodbye to the old country house. After nearly 70 years since its birth, our family ceased to be its owner. However, I could not say goodbye to This Place. I come back to it even today. And, though, nobody is able to recognize me as a young girl in colourful dress, with a string of beads around the neck, with a typical tin of fish in her hand, mixing with a stick jagged rose petals, this place still lives inside. I find silence there, each time by my mind's eye I can see my childhood once more and those who passed away...

This little girl, wearing colourful dress, was making a floral cheesecake back then...




1973




SWEET CHEESECAKES
BAKED



VANILLA-SCENTED CHEESECAKE ON CHOCOLATE BASE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg semi-fat cottage cheese
- 8 eggs
- 200 g powdered sugar
- 100 g butter
- 2 teaspoons of orange essence
- ½ lemon
- 1 vanilla pod
- 2 tablespoons of semolina
- 1 tablespoon of 18% cream
- 100 g raisins
- 2 teaspoons of orange peel

BASE:

- 150 g butter
- 180 g wheat flour
- 100 g powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon of 18% cream
- 2 tablespoons of cocoa

DIRECTIONS

BASE: Knead flour, egg, sugar, cocoa and cream with cold butter for shortcrust pastry. Shape into a ball, wrap with foil and cool in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
After taking out, cover with the pastry a bottom of the cake-pan (26 cm), which is lined with parchment paper.

CHEESE PASTE: Cottage cheese should be ground twice. Mix or knead butter with powdered sugar for fluff in a big bowl or makitra. Add yolks separately, whites set aside, in the refrigerator. Then, add the cottage cheese, a spoon after a spoon, mix or knead it. Squeeze lemon to get juice, add cream, peel, orange essence and hollow out beads from the pod of vanilla. Beat whites until stiff with a pinch of salt addition and join it carefully with cheese pastry. At the very end – add semolina and wetted earlier and stained raisins.
Pour the pastry into cocoa base. Bake the cheesecake in 160°C for 1.5 h. Cool in the open oven.

The cheesecake reaches high size.