

Roger and Me by Michelle Huisman

This is Michelle, your Tree River cook here and I want to fill you in on one of the highlights of my summer. Yes, you guessed right, it was my pet ground squirrel or Sik-Sik which I named Roger. They tell me in previous summers he was named Flash. Now Roger is a Sik-Sik of surprisingly gigantic proportions, twice the size of an average Sik-Sik. The tubby little fellow got that way much to the help of our guests who Roger often ate his favourite food (i.e. walnuts) right out of their hands.

Did you know?

Sik Sik's are the only mammal known to allow its body temperatures to drop below freezing. The water within its body remains fluid even though it doesn't contain any form of antifreeze. Instead, Sik-Sik's are able to balance on the edge of freezing only because their body is completely void of any foreign object (i.e. dust, dirt, food) which an ice crystal needs to form around.



Furthermore, did you know how ground squirrel's got their native name Sik Sik? Well, if a Wolf, Wolverine or Grizzly Bear is spotted by a ground squirrel the squirrel chatters sik-sik-sik warning other fellow Sik-Sik's of the nearby threat. The call's pitch varies based on which direction the threat is coming from. Therefore, the Inuit named them appropriately. Furthermore, if a golden eagle is spotted overhead the alarm call is a quick high pitched whistle. Therefore, Sik-Sik's are able to communicate to others of their kind the type of predator that is endangering the colony and what direction the threat is coming from. Pretty smart for mammal with a brain the size of a walnut! Speaking of walnuts.....

Roger's Cheesecake Recipe

For the crust, combine:

4 T melted butter

1 c graham wafer crumbs

2 Tablespoon sugar

1/2 cup chopped **walnuts** or pecans

1/4 tsp nutmeg

Blend together then press into a buttered springform 9" pan. Bake for 10 - 12 min at 350 degrees. Let cool completely.

For the filling, in a large bowl combine:

2lb/1kg room temperature cream cheese

1 cup of sugar

Beat for 5 min, trying not to add a lot of air (it will sink when it comes out of the oven).

Add 3 eggs, one at a time.

Add 2 Tablespoon of vanilla and the juice of one lemon.

Beat until creamy and lump-free. Pour over the cooled crust then cover with a pot lid or another pan to insulate it while it bakes. Bake for 45 - 50 min at 320 degrees. It will be ready when the middle jiggles just slightly.