

Catawba River Floating Dark Chocolate, Cream Cheese and Caramel Parfaits

August 2014 by Camine Pappas/makes 4 desserts served in a 3 inch square serving dish.
Can stack in tall parfait as well.

INGREDIENTS:

6 ounces room temperature cream cheese
1 C heavy cream, whipped to make 2 C
3 T heavy whipping cream
1 T white sugar
½ t vanilla extract
½ C dark chocolate morsels
1/3 C room temperature caramel sauce
4 Ghirardelli caramel filled, dark chocolate squares, cut in half

DIRECTIONS:

With an electric mixer, beat the 1 C of whipping cream until stiff peaks form, add the white sugar and vanilla and beat just a few moments longer. Add the cream cheese, breaking into small pieces. Using a small whisk, gently incorporate the cream cheese and whipped cream, then beat until it is a custard consistency.

In the microwave, in a heat safe, small glass bowl, melt the chocolate, cooking 10 seconds at a time and stirring with whisk until melted. Do NOT let it get too HOT or bubble! Take out, let it cook for about 1 minute. Then add the 3 T cream and whisk until shiny and smooth. When you first start it will look like it is going to be grainy and clumpy. But it will become smooth. If it doesn't smooth out right away, add about 1 T of milk, whisk and stir until the ganache is, as mentioned, shiny.

To assemble: In small glass bowls, (or handy small plastic containers for traveling to your picnic site) cover the bottom of each with a fourth of the caramel sauce. Gently mound a pillow of cream cheese mixture and spread out a bit so that the caramel still shows from the bottom around the edges. Place a dollop of ganache in the center. With a toothpick, spread out the chocolate into the cream into the design of your choice. Don't do too many swipes or it will all start clumping together.

Take the two halves of the chocolate squares, and place in the center of each dessert. Cover, chill until firm.

