



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, OCT. 16, 2023**

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Raleigh’s Shenita Pelham wins N.C. State Fair’s banana pudding Home Chef Challenge with her “Boozie Banana Pudding Cheesecake”

RALEIGH – Shenita Arvia Pelham of Raleigh earned the top spot and \$500 in prize money in the State Fair’s “Down Home Dessert: Banana Pudding Challenge” presented by Ambetter Health of North Carolina. Pelham, a native of Biscoe, served up her “Boozie Banana Pudding Cheesecake” for the win.

Julia Truelove of Raleigh placed second, earning \$300 for her “Taste of New Orleans Banana Pudding.” Third place and \$200 went to Aasiyah Maryam of Durham for her “Classic Banana Pudding with Banana Infused Praline Ice Cream.”

The winning recipe follows:

Boozie Banana Pudding Cheesecake

Credit: Adapted from "Banana Pudding Cheesecake," Life, Love, and Sugar
Yield: 6-10 Slices
Prep Time: 1 hour
Cook Time: 2 hours 50 minutes
Total Time: 3 hours 50 minutes



Ingredients

CRUST

- 1 ⅔ cups graham crackers, crushed
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 4 tablespoons salted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon instant banana cream pudding mix, dry
- ½ teaspoon banana extract

CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 1 cup banana pudding cream Moonshine
- 24 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3.4 ounces instant banana cream pudding mix, dry
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ⅓ cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (2-3 bananas)

BANANA PUDDING TOPPING

- 3.4 ounces instant banana cream pudding mix, dry
- 1 ½ cups cold 2% milk
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon banana pudding cream Moonshine

WHIPPED TOPPING

- 1 ¼ cups heavy whipping cream, cold
- 6 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- vanilla wafer cookies, whole (As many as you like)

Instructions

CRUST

- Preheat oven to 325°F. Line an 8-inch springform pan with parchment paper in the bottom.
- Combine the crust ingredients in a small bowl. Press the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of the springform pan.
- Bake the crust for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool.
 - Cover the outsides of the pan with aluminum foil so that water from the water bath cannot get in. Set prepared pan aside.

CHEESECAKE FILLING

- Reduce oven temperature to 300°F.
- In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar, flour and pudding mix on low speed until well combined and smooth. Mixture will be sticky. Be sure to use low speed to reduce the amount of air added to the batter, which can cause cracks. Scrape down the sides of the bowl.

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- Add the sour cream and mix on low speed until well combined.
- Add the heavy whipping cream and Moonshine on low speed.
- Add the eggs one at a time, mixing slowly to combine after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed to make sure everything is well combined.
- Add the mashed banana and vanilla extract and mix on low speed until well combined. Mixture will be a little lumpy.
- Pour the cheesecake batter into the crust.
- Place the springform pan inside another larger pan. Fill the outside pan with enough warm water to go about halfway up the sides of the springform pan. The water should not go above the top edge of the aluminum foil on the springform pan.
- Bake for 1 hour 40 minutes. The center should be set, but still jiggly.
- Turn off the oven and leave the door closed for 30 minutes. The cheesecake will continue to cook, but slowly begin to cool as well.
- Crack the door of the oven for 30 minutes to allow the cheesecake to continue to cool slowly.
- Remove the cheesecake from the oven and water bath wrapping and refrigerate until cool and firm, 5-6 hours or overnight.

TOPPING

- When cooled and ready to serve, remove the cheesecake from the springform pan and place on a serving plate.
- To make the banana pudding topping, add the instant banana cream pudding mix into a small bowl and whisk in milk, heavy whipping cream and Moonshine for 2 mins. (Refrigerate for 5 mins)
- To make the whipped cream, add the heavy whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla extract to a large mixer bowl and whip on high speed until stiff peaks form.
- Spread a layer of banana pudding on top of the cheesecake, then pipe a layer of whipped cream swirls on top.
- Finish off the cheesecake with vanilla wafers on top.
- Slice, cut and enjoy!
- Cheesecake is best when stored well covered in the fridge for 3-4 days.



1st Place: Boozie Banana Pudding Cheesecake



2nd Place: Taste of New Orleans Banana Pudding



3rd Place: Classic Banana Pudding w/ Infused Pecan Praline Ice Cream

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