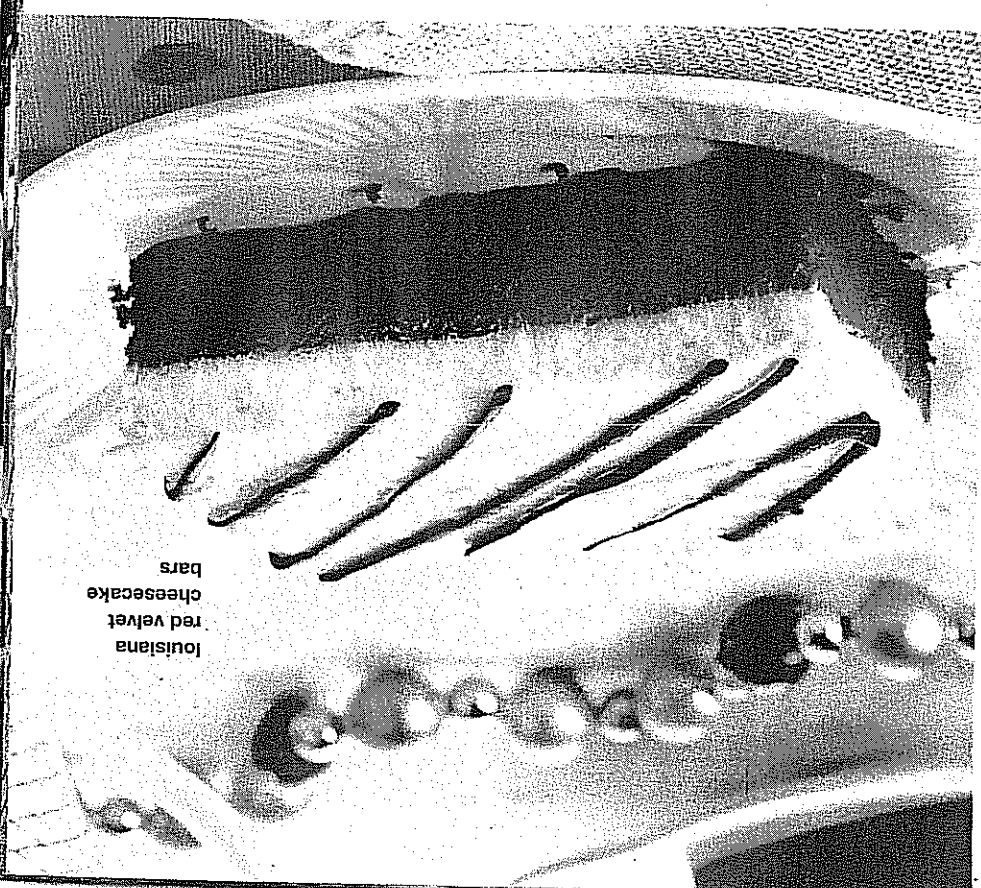


**A SOUTHERN CLASSIC**  
 Whether the menu is Cajun, Creole or just plain Southern, dessert in Louisiana is bound to be a slice of red velvet cake. Not just a wedding cake favorite, it's evolved into cupcakes, too, always with the all-important topping of white frosting. Despite many legends, the true origins of this dessert remain a mystery, but one thing is sure—you can count on it to be a big hit at your holiday gathering.

**what you need**  
 24 Oreo Cookies, finely crushed (about 2 cups)  
 ¼ cup butter, melted  
 6 squares Baker's Semi-Sweet Chocolate, divided  
 3 pkg. (8 oz. each) Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened  
 ¼ cup sugar  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 3 eggs  
 1 Tbsp. red food coloring

**make it**  
 HEAT oven to 350°F.  
 MIX cookie crumbs and butter; press onto bottom of 13x9-inch pan sprayed with cooking spray.  
 MELT 4 chocolate squares as directed on package; pour into medium bowl. Set aside.  
 Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla with mixer until well blended. Add eggs; beat just until blended. Remove 2 cups batter; mix with melted chocolate and food coloring. Carefully spread over crust; cover with remaining plain batter.  
 BAKE 26 to 28 min. or until center is almost set. Cool completely. Melt remaining chocolate; drizzle over dessert. Refrigerate 4 hours.  
 LOUISIANA RED VELVET CHEESECAKE MINSI: Cut chilled dessert into 1½-inch squares. Or use small decorative cookie cutters to cut into miniature shapes. Garnish each with a mini Oreo Cookie just before serving.

**louisiana red velvet cheesecake bars**  
 PREP 20 min. TOTAL 5 hours 48 min. (incl. refrigerating) MAKES 16 servings.



louisiana red velvet cheesecake bars

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