CASHEW "CHEESECAKE"

SERVES 10-12

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Crust:
1 cup raw almonds (or pecans or walnuts)
1 cup soft Medjool dates, pitted (about 10)
¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
¼ teaspoon sea salt
Filling:
*3 cups (1 pound) **raw** cashews, soaked for at least 5 hours or overnight and drained*
2/3 cup fresh lemon juice
2/3 cup unrefined coconut oil, melted (if you have a Vitamix, no need to melt)
2/3 cup raw honey (not vegan) or Grade A maple syrup (vegan, but not raw)
Seeds from 2 whole vanilla beans (or 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract)
2 cups fresh strawberries (my preference) or raspberries (thaw completely if frozen)

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1. Place almonds, dates, coconut and salt in a food processor and process until the mixture holds together (it should be sticky). Transfer the mixture onto the bottom of a 9" spring-form pan and press firmly, making sure that the edges are well packed and that the base is relatively even throughout.

2. In a Vita-Mix or food processor, place all filling ingredients (except strawberries) and process on high until very smooth. This may take a minute or two.

3. Pour about 3 cups of the mixture onto the crust and smooth with a spatula. Add the strawberries to the Vita-Mix/food processor and blend until smooth. Pour the strawberry mixture onto the first layer of filling. Place in the freezer until solid. Cover with foil to protect from freezer burn.

4. To serve, remove from the freezer at least 60 minutes prior to eating. After it has defrosted, store in the refrigerator until ready to eat. Run a thin knife between the cake and the pan and then release the springform ring. Serve on its own, or with fresh fruit. Store leftovers in the refrigerator if you plan to eat it within a few days. Otherwise, store leftovers in the freezer.