By Ashleigh Noyes
Tribune Staff

The holidays are upon us–or so I like to say they are! Holiday season is my favorite time of year all of the hustle and bustle and beautiful decor everywhere you turn. This year, I am hosting family Thanksgiving at my house and I have decided to challenge myself with a new adventure in the kitchen. CHEESECAKE!

I have made cheesecakes before, but they never turn out quite right. So, now the challenge begins. I need to make the perfect one to serve at the Thanksgiving table. I mean, I can't serve a room full of hungry people with a deflated and half-burned cheesecake can I?

My Grandmother, being the wonderful woman she is, brings me stacks of magazines and cut out recipes almost weekly. I happened to come across this one in a stack she recently gave me and it is the perfect fit, I do believe.

Vanilla Cheesecake

40 vanilla wafers, crushed
3 tablespoons butter
4 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, softened and divided
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla, divided
3 eggs
1 (8 oz.) tub whipped topping.

Heat oven to 325°F.

Mix wafer crumbs and butter, then press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan.

Beat 3 packages of cream cheese, 3/4 cup sugar and 1 tablespoon vanilla with a mixer until well blended. Add the eggs one at a time on low until just blended. Pour over the crust.

Bake for 50-55 minutes until center is almost set. Run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen cake and let cool completely.

Beat remaining cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until well blended. Add whipped topping. Spread over top of the cooled cheesecake and refrigerate for 4 hours.