

Mini Cheesecakes with Cherries

There's something about the creamy, rich texture of cheesecake that lures me in—and everyone I know, too. One way to make cheesecake more fun when entertaining is with these pretty little mini cheesecakes, made in small, ready-to-serve portions that eliminate the last-minute fuss of plating. I use reduced-fat cream cheese in this version, but you can use full-fat cream cheese if you prefer.

Makes 12 mini cheesecakes

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Baking time: 30 to 35 minutes

Chilling time: 2 hours

6 gluten-free vanilla or lemon cookies

16 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese or cream cheese alternative

1/2 cup sugar

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

2 large eggs, at room temperature

3/4 cup cherry pie filling

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Place a paper or foil cupcake liner in each cup of a standard 12-cup nonstick muffin pan (gray, not black). Crumble half of a cookie into the bottom of each liner.

2. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla with an electric mixer on medium speed until well blended, then add the eggs and mix just until they are incorporated. Divide the filling among the liners.

3. Bake until the tops are dry and just start to crack, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and cool the cupcakes in the pan for 15 minutes. They may fall slightly; but the cherry topping will fill the indentation. Remove the mini cheesecakes from the pan and refrigerate for 2 hours.

4. At serving time, remove the cheesecakes from the liners (discard the liners), place each cheesecake on a dessert plate, and serve, topped with 2 tablespoons of cherry pie filling.

Per cheesecake: 160 calories; 5g protein; 10g total fat; 1g fiber; 14g carbohydrates; 60mg cholesterol; 162mg sodium