

Lemon Curd Mini Cheesecakes

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Original recipe and notes at www.devamadeo.com



Details:

Yield: 12 mini cheesecakes

Total time: 30 minutes plus 30 minutes chilling time for the cheesecake, 25 minutes plus 6 to 8 hours chilling time for the already assembled mini cheesecakes, 10 for the Italian meringue

Prep time: 10 minutes for the cheesecake, 10 minutes for the lemon curd, 10 minutes for the meringue

Baking time: 5 minutes for the crust, 10 minutes for the cheesecakes

Equipment: Mini cheesecake pan, stand mixer or electric hand mixer, large bowl and skillet, candy thermometer (only for the meringue)

My Prep:

Ingredients:

Basic Graham Cracker Crust:

- Unsalted butter – 5 TBSP
- Traditional graham crackers – 6 whole rectangular crackers, broken in small pieces (about 4 oz.)
- Raw or granulated sugar - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ TBSP

Lemon Cheesecake Filling:

- Cream cheese, at room temperature – 2 - 8 oz packages
- Raw sugar – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
- Organic cage free eggs – 2, large

Steps:

To make the crust:

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spray each tin from the mini cheesecake pan with baking spray.

In a small saucepan place the 5 tablespoons of butter and heat in medium to low heat. Retire from heat right after the butter has melted.

Break the crackers in pieces while you throw them in the bowl. Add the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of sugar and run the processor until the cookies are mostly grounded. With the processor running pour butter through the food processor lid opening, until the crumbs look hydrated, about 10 to 15 seconds.

- Egg yolks— 1, from large egg
- Unbleached organic all purpose flour – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ TBSP
- Lemon juice – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ TBSP, about the juice of half a medium lemon
- Pure vanilla extract – $\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp

Lemon Curd Layer:

- Whole organic egg – 1
- Egg yolk – 1
- Raw sugar – $\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 2 TBSP
- Lemon zest (optional) - from 1 medium lemon
- Freshly squeezed lemon juice – $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Butter, cubed – 4 TBSP ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick)

Italian Meringue:

- Egg whites, at room temperature – 2 (if using just one, reduce by half the rest of the ingredients and the whipping time. Water and sugar cooking time remains the same.)
- Lemon juice – $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp, plus a lemon wedge to rub the wire attachment and bowl.
- Raw sugar – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Water – $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

Stop the processor and pull down any crumbs crawling up the walls of the bowl if necessary and pulse a few seconds more.

Transfer crumbs to mini cheesecake tins. Using a tamper press crumbs very tightly. Use a slightly wet pastry brush or paper towel to clean up crumbs that remain on the inside wall of the tins. Bake for 5 to 6 minutes. Take it out of the oven to let it cool down.

Increase oven temperature to 425° and place a square or rectangular oven dish with hot water in the bottom rack of your oven.

To make the cheesecake filling:

While the crust is baking, start making the cheesecake batter. Either in the bowl of a stand up mixer and using the whisk attachment or in a large bowl using an electric hand mixer with the beaters attached, beat in medium speed the cream cheese for 2 minutes. Add the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar and mix for 1 minute, making sure there is no sugar on the bottom of the bowl. Decrease speed to low and add the 2 eggs and 1 egg yolk, one at a time. Add the 2 tablespoons of flour, the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon of lemon juice and the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of vanilla extract, waiting a few seconds before each addition to allow each ingredient to incorporate. Scrape the wall and bottom of the bowl between additions. Mix about 30 seconds to one minute, until mixture looks homogeneous and there are no big lumps of cream cheese.

Using a measuring cup, pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mixture in individual mini tins. Place mini cheesecake pan in a baking sheet.

When the oven is already in 425°, place cheesecakes in it and bake for 3 minutes. Drop oven temperature to 275° and bake for about 10 minutes, until the cheesecake looks set and dry around the edges but slightly jiggly and shiny in the center. Retire from oven and let it cool down until they have lost the steam. Place in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

My recipe highlights:

Extra notes:

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To make the lemon curd:

Fill a large skillet with water until half thru and bring water to light boil over medium low heat.

In a medium glass bowl whisk thoroughly the eggs and the egg yolk with the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 2 tablespoons of sugar, the lemon zest and the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lemon juice, until the eggs have completely mixed and the sugar has dissolved. Place the bowl on the skillet and using a wooden spoon stir slowly but almost constantly until the mixture thickens, this could take from 10 to 15 minutes. When the mixture heats it will produce some foamy white streaks. When those streaks disappear the curd should thicken up in the next 5 minutes. You are looking for a mixture that makes a sheer cover to the back of a wooden spoon and when you run a finger through the mixture it will leave a clear pass.

Retire from heat and start adding the 4 tablespoons of butter, one cube at a time and gently mix until almost melted before adding the next one. Mix until all the butter is melted and then continue mixing for an extra minute to make the curd more airy and light. Pour about half a tablespoon over each mini cheesecake. Chill for 6 to 8 hours or preferably overnight.

If there's any remaining lemon curd, store in an airtight jar in the fridge. It will be good for a few months.

To make the Italian meringue:

Make sure your bowl and whisk attachment is well cleaned and not greasy. Any grease will prevent egg whites from rising.

Rub the bottom and walls of your bowl and whisk attachment with half a lemon. Put the egg whites and the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of lemon juice in the bowl. Whisk in low speed for 30 seconds to distribute it and then increase the speed to medium (#4 in the Kitchen Aid), until soft peaks form.

In the meantime, combine the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water and the $\frac{1}{2}$ of sugar in a small saucepan. Heat over high heat and cook until a candy thermometer reaches 240° , about three to four minutes.

With the mixer running, pour over the syrup in a thin stream without pausing. Whisk until the meringue reaches room temperature, 4 to 6 minutes. As soon as the bowl feels cool on the outside the meringue is ready to go.

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