

Jane's Delicious Miniature Cheesecakes ;-)
(makes around 30 cheesecakes)

4, 8 oz. packages of cream cheese (at room temperature)
1-1/4 cup sugar
4 large eggs
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla
1 package Oreos (*or make your own chocolate cookies*)

Bake cookies (*see Plain Chocolate Cookie recipe*) and let cool completely. OR separate 15 Oreos and discard filling so you end up with 30 wafers.

Place one cookie/wafer in the bottom of regular muffin papers and place in muffin pan.

In large bowl, combine the cream cheese, sugar, eggs, and vanilla. Mix well.

Spoon about 4 Tablespoons cream cheese mixture on top of each wafer. (*I used a 1/4 cup to scoop mixture onto cookies*).

Bake in preheated oven at 325 degrees for about 25 minutes or until knife inserted in middle comes out clean.

Cool; add garnish and chill until ready to serve. I garnished with dollops of melted dark chocolate or raspberry sauce (*see Raspberry Sauce recipe*), and had more raspberry sauce and thawed frozen raspberries for topping. You can also use maraschino cherries, cherry pie filling, melted blackberry jam, drizzled chocolate, etc.

Plain Chocolate Cookies *(adapted from Chocolate & the Art of Low-Fat Desserts)*

1 cup flour
½ cup plus 1 Tablespoon unsweetened Dutch process cocoa (like Droste brand)
¼ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt
½ cup plus 1 Tbls. light brown sugar
½ cup plus 1 Tbls. granulated sugar
6 Tbls. unsalted butter (at room temperature)
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 egg white

Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl and mix thoroughly with whisk. Set aside.

Combine sugars in a small bowl and mix well with your fingers, pressing out any lumps. (If lumps are stubborn, process in food processor for a few seconds.) Set aside.

In medium mixing bowl, beat butter until creamy. Add the sugar mixture and vanilla to butter. Beat on high speed for about 1 minute. Beat in 1 egg white. On low speed, beat in *(or stir in with spoon)* flour mixture just until incorporated.

Gather dough together with your hands and form into neat 9-10" log *(or if making for cheesecake bases, try to make diameter of log small enough to fit into bottom of muffin papers*)*. Wrap in wax paper. Chill for at least 45 minutes, or until needed. Cookies may be prepared to this point and refrigerated for up to 3 days or rewrapped in foil or plastic wrap and frozen for up to 3 months.

Place racks in the upper and lower third of the oven and preheat to 350F. Line the cookie sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil.

Use sharp knife to slice rounds of chilled dough a scant ¼-inch thick. Place 1 inch apart on the cookie sheets. Bake for 12-14 minutes. Rotate baking sheets from top to bottom and front to back about halfway through. Cookies may puff and crackle on top, then begin to settle down slightly when done. Use metal spatula to transfer cookies to a rack. Cool completely before storing or stacking. May be stored for 2 weeks.

Variations: Mint Chocolate, add ¼ tsp. peppermint extract with butter.
 Mexican Chocolate: add ½ tsp. ground cinnamon, pinch of pepper and pinch of cayenne to sugars.

**Some of the cookies became too big during baking. I used the open end of a small glass the same size as the muffin paper bottom, pressed it down over the big cookies, and "cut" them to size after they were out of the oven and before they cooled too much.*

Jane's Raspberry Sauce *(I made half of this recipe for the event)*

2 cups frozen raspberries

¼ cup reserved juice from thawed raspberries

1 Tbls. Raspberry Schnapps

¼ cup sugar

Thaw and drain frozen raspberries (reserving ¼ cup of juice). Blend frozen raspberries in blender or food processor, then strain out seeds using a wire mesh strainer over a small bowl. (I used a rubber spatula to work the berry mixture through the strainer.) Combine blended berries with the reserved juice, Raspberry Schnapps, and sugar in small saucepan. Simmer over medium heat for a few minutes. Strain and cool. Keep chilled in refrigerator until ready to use.