



Cozy Cottage Very Blueberry Cheesecakes

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 15 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

bake: to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

crush: to put pressure on a food, like a garlic clove, to break the skin and release its flavor; or to pulverize or grind a food, like a cracker, into small particles with your hands, blender, or food processor.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Paper cupcake liners
- Blender (or bowl + immersion blender)
- Mixing bowls
- Rubber spatula
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Citrus squeezer (optional)

Bowls (2) or ziplock bags (2) for crushing crackers and blueberries

Toothpicks (or knife or fork) for testing cakes

Ingredients

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1/2 C cottage cheese ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1/2 C silken tofu)******

1 1/2 C all-purpose flour ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)******

1 tsp baking powder

2 eggs ******(for EGG ALLERGY sub 2 tsp flaxseeds + 1/3 C water—more info below)******

1 C granulated sugar

1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)******

1/2 C vegetable oil ******

1/2 C water

1/2 lemon, juiced

4 graham crackers ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free graham crackers OR similar style gluten-free/nut-free cookie/cracker/pretzels)******

1/2 C frozen or fresh blueberries

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: For 1/2 C cottage cheese, substitute 1/2 C silken tofu.

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free graham crackers OR similar style gluten-free/nut-free cookie/cracker/pretzels. Substitute gluten-free/nut-free flour. Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Egg: For 2 eggs, substitute 2 tsp flaxseed + 1/3 C water. Stir and soak flaxseeds in warm water for 5 minutes or until fully absorbed and thickened.

Instructions

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intro

Cheesecake is most commonly made using cream cheese or mascarpone. These cheeses are known for having extra creamy, smooth qualities that lend themselves well to creating a dessert like cheesecake. The result is a soft, smooth cake with, hopefully, no cracks on top. What if we changed the cream cheese typically used with cottage cheese? Cottage cheese is much higher in protein, and if we blend it, you will be surprised how glossy and smooth this cheese becomes. Let's dive in!

measure + blend

Measure **1/2 cup of cottage cheese** into a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth. Then, scrape the cottage cheese into a large mixing bowl.

measure + crack

Have your kids measure **1 1/2 cups flour** and **1 teaspoon baking powder** into a medium bowl. Then, measure and crack **2 eggs, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1/2 cup vegetable oil,** and **1/2 cup water** into the bowl with the blended cottage cheese.

slice + juice + whisk

Slice a lemon in half and squeeze the juice from **1/2 lemon** into your bowl. (Reserve the other half of the lemon for the drink if making.) Whisk to combine the ingredients in their separate bowls, then pour them all into the larger bowl and whisk once more. Make sure all ingredients are smoothly combined.

smash + crush

Time for your kids to get some energy out! Place **4 graham crackers** into a bowl or ziplock bag. The kids will crush the graham crackers into tiny crumbs. Set aside. In another bowl or bag, measure **1/2 cup blueberries** and have your kids smash them until they are all goopy and smooshed. (Reserve half of the blueberries for the decorating step below.)

preheat + fold + bake

Preheat your oven to 350 F. Fold the berries into the batter. Place cupcake liners in the wells of a muffin pan. Fill each well using 1/4 measuring cup scoops of batter. Once all the wells are full, slide them into the oven and bake for 13 to 15 minutes or until a fork, knife, or toothpick can be removed from the center of the cake cleanly.

scrumptious science

Both baking soda and baking powder are leavening agents, which means they are added to baked goods before cooking to produce carbon dioxide, causing them to rise. Baking powder contains baking soda, but the two substances are used under different conditions and can provide very different results. Baking soda has only one ingredient: sodium bicarbonate. It is about four times stronger than baking powder and is used in recipes that contain an acidic ingredient. Baking powder contains baking soda, but it also includes an acidifying agent, like cream of tartar.

decorate + serve

Remove the cakes from the oven and allow them to cool for at least 15 minutes. Then, have your students decorate with the graham cracker crumbs and reserved smashed blueberries. Eat and enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Cottage Cheese!

Hi! I'm Cottage Cheese!

"I can be a low-fat, protein-filled meal on my own, or you can add me to granola, fruit, smoothies, and baked goods!"

Cottage cheese is made from curdled skim milk, and its texture is known for its small curds. It has a mild, slightly sour taste and a creamy, somewhat soupy consistency.

Early curd cheeses made with milk and salt in Mesopotamia in 3,000 BCE were similar to today's cottage cheese.

Cottage cheese is thought to be the first cheese made in America by immigrants from Europe who had separated curds and whey when making farmer cheese. The name "cottage cheese" started being used in the 1800s.

To make cottage cheese, an acid is introduced to the milk to separate the solids from the whey (the watery part). The acid can be vinegar or lactic acid from a bacteria culture. This process develops the curd, which is cut, cooked, and pressed to release more whey. The resulting curds are then rinsed and salted.

Farmer or baker's cheese is a type of cottage cheese, but it is drier and firmer because more of the liquid has been pressed out. It is used in baking and cooking and can be sliced or crumbled.

Because the curds are made with skim milk, cottage cheese begins as a non-fat product. However, a light cream dressing is often added, resulting in a higher fat content, depending on the percentage of milk fat in the dressing. If it contains 4 percent fat, it is like whole milk; if it has 2 percent milkfat, it is considered low-fat cottage cheese.

Cottage cheese can be eaten alone or with added spices or fruit, like apples, peaches, pears, and pineapple. It can be part of a salad or dip. It can replace ricotta cheese in lasagna or cream cheese in cheesecake or jello salad.

Cottage cheese is high in protein and calcium and low in sugar. Its casein (KAY-seen) protein is a complete protein. It may contain probiotics, good bacteria that can improve digestion. Non-fat and low-fat versions can be part of a healthy, low-fat diet!