

Ricotta Cheesecake

This Delicious Chocolate & Pistachio Covered Cheesecake Self-Identifies as a Cannoli

This is a shout out to my nemesis @chiafullo and his army of Italian Nonnas. After tweaking his regular cannoli recipe, to make my low point cannolis (pgs 146-147), I thought it'd be cool to make a ricotta cheesecake based off of the filling. I decided to opt for a 'Sicilian-style' filling, by removing the cinnamon, then adding vanilla and orange zest. After baking, it gets topped with Lily's chocolate chips and crushed pistachios.

Ingredients:

CRUST:

- 1-1/4 cups Fiber One original bran cereal w/ whole grain
- 6 sheets (24 crackers) Honeymaid LOW FAT cinnamon graham crackers. Scan the box. (13 total points)
- 1/3 cup 0 point brown sugar replacement o' choice
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup I Can't Believe It's Not Butter Light, warmed
- 1-1/2 Tbsp sugar free pancake syrup

BATTER

- 15oz part-skim ricotta cheese
- 3-1/4 cups FAGE fat free plain Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup all purpose flour
- 1-2/3 cups 0 point sugar replacement o' choice
- 3 large eggs PLUS 2 egg yolks, beaten like a snitch, in an episode of 'The Sopranos'.
- 3 tsp imitation vanilla extract (0 points vs regular)
- 1 tsp Watkin's cream cheese flavoring/extract (optional)
- 1 Tbsp orange zest, finely minced

TOPPING

- 100 grams Lily's semi sweet chocolate chips, crushed slightly (or 15 points of any chocolate)
- 1/4 cup shelled pistachios, measured then crushed up
- 1/2 tsp powdered sugar, for dusting

Servings Info.:

Yield: 9" Cheesecake

Servings: 12 slices

Serving Size: 1 slice

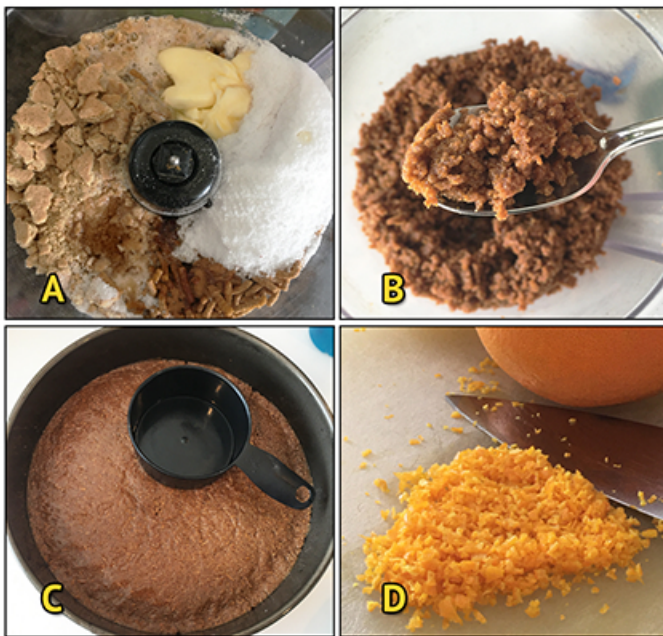


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Use your mobile device's 'Camera' App to
look at this code for nutritional info.

Directions:

- 1-2 hours before baking, set out the ricotta, yogurt and eggs, letting them get to room temperature.

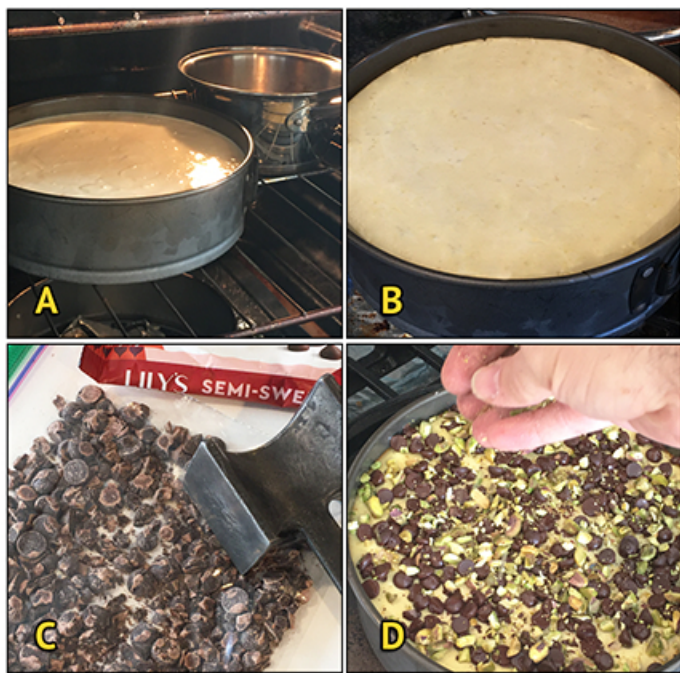


- (A) Add the cereal, graham crackers, sweetener, cinnamon, softened butter and syrup into a food processor. (B) Run the processor till the ingredients are similar in texture to a regular graham cracker crust. Add water if needed. (C) Pour into a 9" springform pan and spread around the bottom of the pan, by pressing down with a cup or measuring scoop. Done. (D) Zest and finely chop/mince the peel of a large orange, set aside.



3. (A) In a large bowl, mix together the ricotta, till smooth. Add the greek yogurt, blend till smooth. Add the eggs and vanilla extract, mixing on low speed until smooth. Finally, add the flour, sweetener and minced orange zest. Mix on low speed, till smooth. (B) Pour into the prepared crust. Tap on the sides of the cheesecake pan for 30 seconds, to help release air bubbles trapped within the batter. Don't pummel it, tap like you're gently knocking on a door.

4. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Fill an OVEN SAFE pot with water. Bring to a rolling boil. (see notes about water bath)



5. (A) When the oven is at 325 degrees, place the pot of boiling water into the oven, followed by the cheesecake. (B) Bake your cheesecake for 60-70 minutes at 325 degrees. How do you know when it's done? Open the oven and use a kitchen spoon to poke/jostle the pan. The middle of the cheesecake should still juuuuuust jiggle a little bit. I like the texture of mine at 70 minutes. (C) While the cheesecake is baking, place the chocolate into a plastic bag and pound with a kitchen mallet, creating smaller pieces. Do the same with your pistachios. Set both aside (D) As soon as your cheesecake comes out of the oven, sprinkle the chocolate chip pieces over the top, followed by the crushed pistachios. Place in fridge for at least 4-5 hours, though overnight is best. Finally, right before serving, put the powdered sugar into a fine wire mesh strainer. Hold it 6 inches or so over the cake and lightly tap it, dusting the top of the cheesecake.

NOTES:

- **GRAHAM CRACKERS:** Use LOW FAT cinnamon or honey graham crackers, they are lower in points than regular ones. *Honey Maid* brand scans as 6 sheets for 13 points, but if you search for them in the database, they show as higher than if you actually scan the physical box.
- **ORANGE ZEST:** Using a zest peeler on an orange can be a pain. Try using a vegetable peeler, then chop the slices. Try not to slice off any of the white 'pith' though. You can also leave out the orange zest, then add 1-3/4 tsp cinnamon. Then, it'll be the same filling as my regular cannoli.
- **WATER BATH:** Believe it or not... this cheesecake was a minor miracle. It baked with a smooth, uncracked top, without a water bath! Easy peasy.
- **PISTACHIOS:** Don't like pistachios? No problem. Leave them out and you gain 5 more points for chocolate chips.
- **RICOTTA vs CREAM CHEESE CHEESECAKES:** I gotta bring this up right now. This IS NOT a regular cheesecake, made with cream cheese. It's not liquid creamy. This emulates the filling of a ricotta cheese cannoli. The finished cake has a very slight texture to it, because... RICOTTA CHEESE! If you want a CREAMY cheesecake version of this, make the following simple changes: Use the batter recipe from my "NY Cheesecake", but with orange zest instead of lemon zest and use 1-3/4 tsp cinnamon. When done baking, top it with the pistachios and chocolate, like in this recipe.
- **LILY'S CHOCOLATE CHIPS:** I personally prefer using Lily's semi sweet chips for this dessert, instead of the more easy to find 'Lily's dark chocolate chips'. Though I used Lily's semi sweet chips, you can use 16 points of any kind of chocolate you want, without the points changing.

