

Healthy holiday dessert option

A certain measure of overindulgence is anticipated during the holiday season. Rich foods and desserts are served, and parties are plentiful. However, those who plan to stick to their healthy eating plans can



Create a delicious dessert for holiday celebrations

Lavish meals are a large part of holiday celebrations, with many people indulging in dinners and desserts throughout the holiday season. This is a time when many families display their best recipes, and these may include certain desserts that can be labor-intensive to make or something more fitting for a special occasion.

Cheesecake is an example of a dessert that, due to the time it takes to create and the richness of the dessert itself, is not something many people eat on a regular basis. However, with a time-saving recipe, cheesecake can become a dessert prepared in little time for holiday festivities. Try “Cinnamon Caramel Cheesecake Squares” from “Pampered Chef Season’s Best, Fast, Fun & Fabulous” by Pampered Chef® Test Kitchens.

Cinnamon Caramel Cheesecake Squares

Makes 24 squares

- 2 8-ounce packages seamless crescent dough
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup sugar, divided
- Flour for dusting
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup caramel topping

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Unroll one package of crescent dough into a shallow baking pan. Roll out the dough to edges.
2. Heat the cream cheese in a microwave-safe bowl, uncovered, on high for 30 to 40 seconds, or until softened. Whisk until almost smooth.
3. Add the egg, vanilla and 1/2 cup of the sugar to the bowl. Whisk until smooth. Spread over the crescent dough.
4. Lightly sprinkle the flat side of a cutting board with flour. Unroll the second package of crescent dough and roll it into a 13- by 12-inch rectangle.
5. Fold the dough in half from the short end; gently lift and place in the pan. Unfold and gently stretch the dough over the cream cheese layer; press the edges to seal. Cut off corners of dough hanging over and discard.
6. Bake 22 to 24 minutes, until golden brown.
7. Combine the remaining 1/4 cup sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Place the caramel topping in a 1-cup measuring cup.
8. Remove the pan from the oven. Immediately pour the caramel topping over the cheesecake and spread to the edges of the crust. Sprinkle with the cinnamon-sugar mixture; let stand for 10 minutes.
9. Using a utility knife, cut into 4 x 6 rows to make 24 squares.



Cinnamon Caramel Cheesecake Squares

still enjoy tastes of the season without compromising their fitness or dietary goals.

Many recipes can be made healthier with some simple substitutions, and that even includes decadent desserts. Take, for example, “Wickedly Decadent Deep Chocolate Truffles” from “Low Fat for Life,” (DK) by Sue Krietzman. This low-fat version of a high-fat classic will taste delicious without being too sinful.

Wickedly Decadent Deep Chocolate Truffles

Makes 24

- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate
 - 6 ounces very low-fat fromage frais
 - 2 tablespoons confectioners’ sugar
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1/2 ounces semisweet chocolate, grated
1. Break the chocolate into a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Let it melt, stirring occasionally.
 2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the fromage frais and sugar. Whisk in the vanilla.
 3. When the chocolate is melted and smooth, remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Slowly whisk the chocolate into the fromage frais mixture, using a rubber spatula to incorporate every bit of chocolate. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for an hour.
 4. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper. Scatter the grated chocolate on a plate. Scoop out the chilled chocolate mixture in teaspoonfuls, roll into balls, then roll the balls in the grated chocolate and put on the prepared baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm.
 5. Put the truffles in small paper cases. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Per truffle: Total fat: 2 g; saturated fat: 1 g; unsaturated fat: 1 g; cholesterol: 1 mg; sodium: 3 mg; calories: 52.

Home for the holidays

Christmas carols and festive songs help make the holidays complete by setting the mood for the festivities to come. Songs resonate differently with people during the holiday season. For example, some celebrants find certain holiday tunes or lyrics especially poignant. Those who might be missing home or planning on visiting friends and relatives who live far away during the holiday season often find the words to “(There’s No Place Like) Home for the Holidays,” are an accurate portrayal of the sentiments of holiday traveling. Composed by Robert Allen, with lyrics by Al Stillman, “(There’s No Place Like) Home for the Holidays” was published in 1954. The best-known recordings of the song are by Perry Como, who recorded it twice - once in 1954 and then again in 1959 with a different musical arrangement. The first version reached #8 on the Billboard magazine chart in the United States. The Carpenters recorded another popular version of the song for their 1984 album, “An Old-Fashioned Christmas.” Nora Jones and Cyndi Lauper also recorded a duet version of the song in 2011.

Holiday Joy

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