

Mini Lemon Meringue Cheesecake

Crust

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 1/2 tbsp sugar
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

Cheesecake

- 2 (8-oz/225 g) packages cream cheese, room temperature
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tbsp finely grated lemon zest
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, room temperature

Meringue:

- 2 large egg whites
- 1/4 tsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp cornstarch

Preheat oven to 350°F and line 48 mini muffin tins with paper cups.

To make crust, combine all ingredients until evenly blended and crumbly. Press into bottom of mini muffins cups. Bake for 8 minutes, then cool.

To make cheesecake, reduce oven to 325°F. Beat cream cheese until smooth and fluffy, then gradually add sugar while beating, scraping the sides of the bowl often. Beat in cornstarch, lemon zest, lemon juice and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, scraping well after each addition. Spoon or pipe cheesecake filling into cooled mini muffin tins and bake for about 18 minutes, until cheesecake still moves a little when pan is shaken gently. Let cheesecakes cool to room temperature. Meringue layer can be made once cheesecakes have cooled and cheesecakes can be chilled overnight and then finished.

For meringue, preheat oven to 375°F. With an electric mixer, whip egg whites with lemon juice until foamy. While whipping, gradually pour in sugar and whip on one speed less than highest until whites hold a stiff peak (the meringue stands upright when whisk is lifted). Whisk in cornstarch. Fill a piping bag fitted with a large star or plain tip and pipe on top of each cheesecake. Bake pie for about 6 minutes, just until meringue browns lightly. Allow cheesecakes to chill for at least an hour and up to a day before serving.

Makes about 4 dozen mini cheesecakes.

