White Cheddar, Apple and Bacon Cheesecake

Author: From Diane Phillips' cookbook Happy Holidays from the Diva of Do-Ahead



1/4 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup light brown sugar
4 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, sliced
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 pinch ground nutmeg
6 pieces bacon, cooked and crumbled
16 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 large eggs
2 cups sharp white cheddar cheese, grated
1 teaspoon hot sauce

Serving Ideas: Serve with crackers, cocktail rye bread or pumpernickel rounds.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 180 Calories; 15g Fat (71.6% calories from fat); 4g Protein; 9g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 67mg Cholesterol; 141mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 0 Vegetable; 1/2 Fruit; 2 1/2 Fat; 1/2 Other Carbohydrates.

Carolyn T's Tasting Spoons blog: http://tastingspoons.com

Description: An elegant, but make-ahead cheesecake. But it's not dessert!

Notes: It's important that the parchment or foil completely cover the bottom and partway up the sides in one continuous piece (without any patched pieces or edges) as the liquid from the apples will ooze right out of the springform pan. Although this is an appetizer, it can also be served as a sit-down starter for a light dinner. You can use different kinds of cheddar cheese (I used an imported one that contained porter ale, which gave the cheesecake a freckled look), but it does need to be a sharp cheese.

1. Line the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan or a cake pan with 3-inch tall sides with a continuous piece of parchment paper or aluminum foil and coat with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a medium-sized skillet over medium heat melt the butter, then add the brown sugar and stir until dissolved. Add the sliced apples and stir to coat them with the sauce. Add the lemon juice, cinnamon and nutmeg and continue stirring a few times for 4-5 minutes. The apples will retain their crispness but should have absorbed some of the sauce. Pour the apples and sauce into the prepared pan and arrange in a decorative pattern, if desired. Sprinkle the bacon evenly on top of the apples.
3. Preheat the oven to 350.
4. In a bowl of an electric mixer, beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating until light and fluffy. Stir in the cheddar cheese and hot sauce. Gently pour or spoon the mixture over the apples and bacon in the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a rubber spatula.
5. Bake until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cheesecake comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Leave the cheesecake in the oven with the door ajar for another 30 minutes (to help prevent cracks from developing).
6. Remove the cheesecake from the oven and let cool on a rack for another 30-45 minutes.
7. Place a large serving plate over the pan, invert, and remove the pan from the cheesecake. Peel away the parchment or foil. At this point you can let the cheesecake cool completely, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Bring to room temp before serving. Serve at room temp with crackers or bread.