

Ginger & Orange Ricotta Cheesecake Cupcakes

INGREDIENTS:

Cupcakes:

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs, separated at room temperature
- 30 oz Pollio Grade A Part-Skim Ricotta, well drained
- 3 tbsp Paradise Candied Fruit Crystallized Ginger, finely chopped
- 4 large eggs, separated at room temperature
- Zest of 1 orange
- Juice of $\frac{1}{4}$ an orange
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole wheat flour, sifted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{8}$ ground clove

Crust:

- 10 Sweetzels Spiced Wafer Cookies, crumbled
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsalted butter, melted

Frosting:

- 8 oz neufchâtel cheese, room temperature
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter, room temperature]
- 2 tbsp molasses
- 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 tsp plant-based milk, room temperature

Candied Orange Slices:

- 2 navel oranges, sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick
- 4 cups water, divided
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- Water for boiling

Ganache:

- 10 oz 60% cacao dark chocolate chips
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups heavy cream
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter



DIRECTIONS:

CUPCAKES:

Place an oven rack in the middle of the oven. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a cupcake pan with cupcake liners and set aside.

In a food processor, manually pulse the cookies until crumbled, but not dusty. Place in a mixing bowl and stir in the melted butter until well combined and all of the crumbs are wet. Place a heaping tablespoon of cookie mixture at the bottom of each cupcake liner. Flatten with your fingers to cover the bottom of the liners. Set aside.

With a paper towel, remove any excess cookie crumbs from the food processor bowl and blade.

Using a sieve, sift together the flour, cinnamon, ground ginger, nutmeg, and clove. Set aside.

Separate the eggs, placing the whites in the bowl of standing mixer and the yolks in the food processor bowl.

Add the sugar and vanilla to the food processor and process on low until thick and yellow, about 1 minute. Add the ricotta and orange zest and process until smooth, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a mixing bowl.

Beat the egg whites on high speed until they hold stiff peaks. Gradually fold the whites into the ricotta mixture and return to the bowl of the standing mixer.

On medium low speed, mix in the heavy cream and orange juice. Gradually mix in the flour mixture until well combined. Fold in the crystallized ginger until well dispersed.

Fill each of the cupcake liners with a quarter cup of batter using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measuring cup. Place a baking sheet on the oven rack and add two cups of water to it. Carefully place the cupcake pan in the water. Bake for about 45 minutes, checking on them every 15 minutes, until the tops are light golden brown. Transfer the cupcake pan to a wire cooling rack to cool completely. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for one 1 day before serving.

FROSTING:

Sift confectioners' sugar twice into a large bowl.

Beat neufchâtel cheese and butter together.

Add molasses and vanilla.

Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar.

NOTE: If the icing is too thin, add more confectioners' sugar. If it is too thick, add milk.

GANACHE:

Add the chocolate to a medium heat-proof bowl. Set aside.

Add the heavy cream to a small saucepan and add the orange zest. Heat the cream on medium heat, stirring constantly until it comes to a boil. Remove from heat.

Carefully add the hot cream to the chocolate, stirring until all the chocolate has melted, then immediately add the butter and stir until melted.

CANDIED ORANGE SLICES:

Fill a large bowl with ice water. Set aside.

Add 2 cups of the water to a large saucepan and bring to a boil on high heat. Add the orange slices and boil for 2 minutes (this will remove some of the bitterness from the orange peel). Transfer orange slices to the ice water and discard the boiled water.

In the same saucepan, add the sugar and remaining 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar is completely dissolved.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the orange slices. Simmer for 30-40 minutes, or until rinds are slightly translucent. Gently swirl the oranges every 10 minutes to make sure they are evenly coated with sugar water.

Transfer the slices to a wire cooling rack set over a large baking sheet. Allow to set for 24 to 48 hours, or until dry.

Line a baking sheet with wax paper. Cut the slices in half and dip the straight edge into the ganache. Place on the baking sheet and allow the ganache to cool and harden in the fridge.

To serve: Frost each cupcake using a piping bag. Sprinkle frosting with cookie crust crumbs. Place a candied orange slice on top. Serve immediately or refrigerate up to 48 hours.