

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Savory Cheesecake for the Holidays
December 2020

Cheesecake usually means sweet and is served as dessert. However, the amazing thing about cheesecake is that it can be sweet or savory. Savory cheesecakes are creamy mixtures that are great to spread on crackers or chips and that makes them perfect for the holidays.

I have two savory cheesecake recipes that I use on a regular basis and there are many other variations out there as well. One is a ham and Swiss cheese version that is spread on crackers and the other is a Mexican version with tortilla chips. For years, the standard Mexican appetizer was a seven layer dip and it was and still is very good with its layers of beans, guacamole, sour cream, cheese, salsa, green onions and black olives. But this Mexican Appetizer Cheesecake kicks up the appetizer table to another level with a more elegant Mexican flavored dish.



My family always had finger foods on Christmas Eve. We would get a plate of all different little bites and then open presents around the tree while finishing up with cookies and candies. So while we may not be having as many holiday parties and gatherings this year, there are plenty of opportunities during the holidays to use this appetizer, even within our own family. It makes a good snack while watching sports games on television or while trimming the tree or waiting for the new year to ring in.

The base of the cheesecake is cream cheese and eggs and is flavored with chicken bouillon, chili powder, a little hot pepper sauce and mild green chiles. It is not super spicy but very flavorful. If you like lots of heat you may want to amp it up with more hot sauce, cayenne pepper or diced canned jalapenos (instead of green chiles) in the mixture or use a hot salsa on top. For the toppings, the suggestions are salsa, cheese, green onions and black olives but use whatever you like or have on hand.

So enjoy celebrating the season with your household and whip up a savory cheesecake to make it festive!

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating and family meals (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Mexican Appetizer Cheesecake

- 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules
- 1/2 cup hot water
- 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 2 eggs

1 cup finely chopped, cooked chicken breast
1 (4-ounce) can chopped green chiles, drained
Salsa
Shredded Cheddar cheese
Sliced green onions
Sliced black olives
Tortilla chips

Dissolve bouillon granules in water and set aside. In a mixer bowl, beat cream cheese, chili powder and hot sauce until smooth with an electric mixer. Add eggs, one at a time, and mix well. Slowly add bouillon liquid, beating until smooth. Stir in chicken and chiles. Pour into 9 inch springform pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes or until set. Cool 15 minutes. Carefully run knife around edge of pan and remove side of pan. Top cheesecake with salsa, cheese, green onion and black olives before serving. Serve warm or chilled with tortilla chips. Refrigerate leftovers.