Date and Black-Pepper Cheese Cups

12 crisp filo cups, each with about 28 g date-cheese filling | Active 30 min | Cook 15 min | Total 65 min

Ingredients

• 3 commercial filo sheets, each 30 × 40 cm/12 × 16 in, about 90-120 g total, fully thawed in the refrigerator as their packet directs

• 30 g butter (about 2 tablespoons), melted

• 120 g/4 1/4 oz plain cream cheese

• 120 g/4 1/4 oz pasteurized soft goat cheese

• 70 g/2 1/2 oz pitted dates, finely chopped

• 15 ml milk (1 tablespoon)

• 10 ml lemon juice (2 teaspoons)

• 1 g celery seed (about 1/2 teaspoon)

• 0.5 g black pepper (1/4 teaspoon)

Set out

Oven, 12-well muffin tin, each well 90-120 ml with top about 6 cm/2 1/3 in wide, Pastry brush, Knife and board, Clean damp cloth for covering filo package, Bowl and spoon, Scale, Cooling rack, Rigid pastry box, Chilled filling container and cooler

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Celery. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat the oven to 350°F/180°C. Cut each filo sheet into 12 squares of 10 × 10 cm/4 × 4 in, giving 36 pieces. Keep them covered as you work. Brush lightly with all the butter and nest 3 squares at different angles in each of 12 muffin wells.

2. Bake 12-15 minutes until the pastry is golden, dry and crisp, including the bases. Cool in the tin 5 minutes, then lift gently onto the rack and cool fully for at least 20 minutes. Do not fill warm pastry.

3. Mix cream cheese, goat cheese, all the dates, milk, lemon juice, celery seed and pepper until evenly combined. Keep refrigerated at 40°F/4°C or below until assembly.

4. Divide the complete filling among 12 cold pastry cups, about 28 g per cup. Fill shortly before serving, using the spoon to place a small mound without crushing the thin pastry. No extra fruit or leafy garnish is required.

Date and Black-Pepper Cheese Cups

12 crisp filo cups, each with about 28 g date-cheese filling | Active 30 min | Cook 15 min | Total 65 min

Bring it

Carry filling in an iced cooler at 40°F/4°C or below and empty cups in their separate rigid dry box. Do not stack cups under heavy food. Unprotected filling preparation, travel and display share 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C.

Finish at the gathering

Bring the spoon and assemble 12 cups in about 5 minutes on your own tray. No oven or mixer is needed. Put out 6 at a time while the remaining filling stays cold.

Make it yours

The date and pepper combination suits a winter cheese spread. Keep the celery-seed label visible; the cups already have angular pastry edges, so they need no extra seasonal decoration.

Ingredient labels

Filo contains wheat and may include other ingredients. Butter, milk and both cheeses contain milk. Celery seed is a celery allergen in some jurisdictions; check all actual labels.

A useful detail

The 65-minute total begins with fully thawed refrigerated filo and includes cutting, up to 15 minutes baking, cooling and filling. Add the actual packet thawing period beforehand; do not thaw the package on a warm counter.

Another way

Use 120 g plain ricotta, well drained, before weighing instead of goat cheese; the filling will be milder.

Use 70 g finely chopped dried figs instead of dates, removing their tough stems first.

Keep it well

Keep filling at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 2 days or the earliest dairy deadline. Store fully cooled empty pastry airtight for up to 1 day. Serve filled cups the same day, refrigerating promptly under the Bring it handling limits; their pastry softens in the refrigerator.