

TURTLE CHEESECAKE BITES

THIS RECIPE IS MADE IN HONOR OF THE OREO COOKIE'S 100TH BIRTHDAY – MARCH 6, 2012.

- 10 OREO Cookies, finely crushed (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 2 Tbls. Butter, melted
- 12 Caramels (for this recipe I used KRAFT caramel squares)
- 2 Tbls. Milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Pecans, toasted and chopped
- 1 – 8 oz pkg. Cream Cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Sugar
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 1 Egg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Chocolate Chips

NOTE: WHEN MELTING CARAMELS USE A BOWL ABOUT THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF THE INGREDIENTS BECAUSE THE MILK WILL BUBBLE UP WHEN HEATING.

- ☞ Preheat oven to 325°. Place mini cupcake liners into mini cupcake pan.
- ☞ Mix OREO Cookie crumbs with melted butter. Distribute mixture among 24 mini cupcake liners. Press crumbs into bottom of cupcake liners.
- ☞ Place caramels and milk in a microwave safe bowl. Heat on high for 1 minute. Stir caramel to make sure it is melted evenly. If it needs additional melting, heat for 15 second intervals, stirring between. Add pecans and mix until combined evenly. Using half of the caramel-pecan mixture, place about a half-teaspoon on top of OREO crumbs inside each cupcake liner. Cover the remaining half with plastic wrap to use later.
- ☞ Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla on medium speed for 1 full minute. Add the egg and mix on low until just blended. Distribute mix evenly among cupcake cups. Bake for 12-15 minutes (center may split but they should not be browned).
- ☞ After cheesecakes are cooled off, microwave reserved caramel-pecan mixture and distribute evenly among cupcakes. Next, place chocolate chips into ziplock bag. Heat with the bag open on high for 30 seconds. Knead bag gently. If chocolate needs to be melted more continue to heat and knead for 15 second intervals. When chocolate is melted smooth, zip close bag pushing out most of the air. Cut the tip of one of the bottom corners and squeeze bag to pipe chocolate drizzle onto cheesecakes.

Makes 24 mini cheesecakes.