

Recipes excerpted from ***The Cheesecake bible*** by George Geary. Published by Robert Rose Inc., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Copyright 2008. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Pesto Sun-Dried Tomato Cheesecake

Serves 10 to 12

This is a great appetizer when the main course is pasta. Serve as a spread with crackers.

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

9-inch (23 cm) cheesecake pan, ungreased, or springform pan with 3-inch (7.5 cm) sides, lined with parchment paper.

1 cup tightly packed fresh basil leaves	250 ml
3-4 sprigs Italian (flat-leaf) parsley	3 to 4
2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped	2
1/4 cup olive oil	50 ml
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese	125 ml
1/4 tsp salt	1 ml
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper	1 ml
2 packages cream cheese (8 oz/250g each), softened	2
2 eggs	2
1/4 cup all-purpose flour	50 ml
1/2 cup chopped, drained, oil-packed sundried tomatoes (about 10 halves)	125 ml

1. In a food processor fitted with a metal blade, pulse basil, parsley, garlic and olive oil until finely chopped. Stir in Parmesan, salt and pepper. Set aside.

2. In a mixer bowl fitted with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese on medium-high speed until very smooth, for 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Fold in flour, sun-dried tomatoes, and basil mixture by hand.

3. Pour into prepared pan, smoothing out to sides of pan. Bake in preheated oven until top is light brown and center has a slight jiggle to it, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours before serving.

Tips:

Serve slightly warmed, if desired, to make more spreadable.

To serve as an appetizer, place a thin slice on a lettuce leaf.

Variation:

Substitute coarsely chopped pine nuts for the Parmesan.