Virginia Kase

Cheez-It or Leave It



A creamy Buffalo Chicken Dip Topped with a Buttery Cheez-It Crust

and Sprinkles of Candied Bacon

Ingredients:

2 cups Rotisserie Chicken

Two (8-ounce) packages Cream Cheese, softened

2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar Cheese

6 ounces Texas Pete

1 cup crushed Cheez-Its

2 tbsp. melted butter

Directions:

1) Mix cream cheese in stand mixer until creamy.

2) Add chicken, cheese and Texas Pete. Mix well

3) Add mixture into a baking dish.

4) In a separate bowl, mix 1 cup crushed Cheez-Its and 2 tbsp melted butter. Spread evenly over mixture in baking dish

5) Bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

To make Candied Bacon:

Ingredients:

1 lb. bacon

¼ cup brown sugar

1 tsp pepper

1) Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

2) Line baking sheet with aluminum foil then add baking rack over the foil.

3) Place bacon on rack and bake for 15 minutes

4) Add brown sugar and pepper to a bowl and mix well.

5) Brush topside of bacon with sugar mixture.

6) Return to oven and bake for 5-10 minutes longer. Watch carefully, do not overcook.

7) Remove from oven and allow bacon to cool. Cut into small pieces and sprinkle evenly over Cheez-It mixture.

Left overs can be stored in an air-tight container for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.

Lisa Brescia



Cheez-its and chicken...Oh My!!!!

Ingredients:

1 and 1/2 pound ground chicken thighs

2 cups Cheez-it Buffalo wing flavor (crushed into crumbs)

1 large egg

2oz of buffalo wing sauce plus 1/2 cup for the finished dish

1 and 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1 and 1/2 teaspoon onion powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 8oz block of buffalo cheese or your favorite cheese cut into cubes

1 beaten egg and 1/4 cup of flour to coat each meatball before air frying

Directions:

Combine ground chicken, crushed Cheez-its, egg, buffalo sauce, garlic powder, onion powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. Mix until combined.

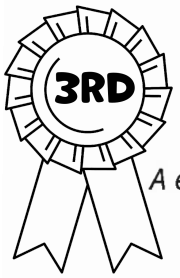
Roll the mixture into 1 inch balls and insert a cheese cube inside the meatball. Make sure the cheese is covered by the meat. Cook in air fryer at 380 degrees for 10 minutes Internal temp should be 165.

Transfer meatballs to a bowl and pour 1/2 cup of buffalo sauce over them and gently toss.

Sprinkle a little extra crushed Cheez-its on top for added crunch and yumminess!

Cook in air fryer 375 degrees for 10 minutes

Claire Lankford



Double the Toast, Double the Treat

A extra toasty, extra sweet dessert duo featuring: Cheez-It/pecan crusted cheesecake with caramel apple topping and triple toasted Cheez-It peanut butter crispy bars

Cheesecake (makes 1 8"x8" pan)

For the crust:

- 1 c Extra-Toasty Cheez-Its, finely crushed
- ½ c Pecans, ground
- 3 T Granulated sugar
- 6 T Butter, melted

For the cheesecake:

- (2) 8 oz bars, cream cheese, softened
- ⅔ c Granulated sugar
- ⅓ c sour cream or strained greek yogurt
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp vanilla paste
- ¼ tsp salt

For the caramel apple topping:

- 1 c Granulated sugar, divided
- ¾ c softened butter, divided
- ½ c Heavy cream, room temperature
- ¼ - ½ tsp Sea salt (to preference)
- 1 tsp vanilla paste
- 1 large tart apple, peeled and diced very small
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of nutmeg (optional)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F Prep a 8"x8" pan by lining with foil or parchment paper with 1"-2" overhang (clip edges if needed)
2. To make the crust: Combine all crust ingredients in a small bowl, then pour into pan. Press in firmly
3. Bake for 10-12 minutes, then allow to cool completely.
4. Lower the oven temperature to 325F.
5. To make the cheesecake filling:
    a. In a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, beat cream cheese and sugar until well combined - 1-2 minutes. Add sour cream, lemon juice, vanilla and salt. Mix until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, until fully mixed.
6. Pour into the pan, bake for 30-35 minutes until edges firm and middle slightly set (will have a jiggle). Cool completely, then cover and refrigerate until fully set (4-6 hours at least)
7. To make the caramel apple topping:
    a. Combine diced apples, 1 T butter, 1 T sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg (if using) in a small saucepan set over medium heat. Stir and cook for 5-10 minutes, or until the apples are softened. Remove and set aside.
    b. In a new pan, add the remaining sugar and heat over medium low heat until melted and golden in color (around 20 minutes). Add in butter and stir quickly. Add heavy cream and again quickly stir in. Finish with salt and vanilla. Return to heat and cook on low 2-3 minutes, then remove and allow to cool slightly.
    c. Add enough caramel sauce to apples for desired consistency
8. To finish, remove cheesecake from refrigerator, remove from pan and cut into squares. Serve with caramel apple topping

Crispy Bars (makes 1 8"x8" pan)

Ingredients

4 c crisped rice cereal
1 ½ c coarsely crushed Extra Toasty Cheez-Its
1 stick unsalted butter
1 (10 ounce) bag large marshmallows
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 Tbs peanut butter
Flaky sea salt (optional)

1. Line 8"x8" pan with parchment paper. Add Cheez-its and cereal to a bowl and set aside.
2. Turn the oven to broil. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and pour a bag of marshmallows on top. Once broiler ready, broil marshmallows until fully toasted to personal preference (do not burn!) Remove and set aside.
3. Place a large pot over medium heat and add butter. Cook for _ minutes, stirring, until butter changes to a dark brown and nutty smell - do not burn! Add half the marshmallows and vanilla, stir until marshmallows are melted. Stir in Cheez-Its, cereal, peanut butter and other half of marshmallows.
4. Pour mixture into pan. Lightly grease hands or a rubber spatula with spray or vegetable oil and press gently into the pan. If using sea salt, sprinkle on top. Allow to cool at room temperature, then remove from the pan and cut into squares.

Chicken Cheez-It Pot Pie

Inspired by Stella Parks' Chicken Pot Pie with Buttermilk Biscuit Topping

Yield: Approx. 8-10 servings

Poached Chicken:

- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 4 Pounds bone-in, skin-on breasts and/or thighs
- 1 yellow onion, split
- 2 carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 celery ribs, roughly chopped
- 3-4 cloves of garlic, crushed
- Bundle of poultry herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme)

Filling:

- 1 packet unflavored gelatin
- ¼ cup reserved chicken stock
- 4 ounces unsalted butter
- 4 ounces (115g) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup diced yellow onion
- 1 cup diced carrot
- 1 cup diced celery
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 quart reserved chicken stock
- 1 ½ teaspoons Maggi seasoning
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- Poached chicken, diced or shredded

Biscuits:

- 1 ¼ cup (~180g) all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup (~85g) Cheez-It crackers
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 8 ounces unsalted butter, cubed, very cold
- 6 ounces buttermilk, very cold
- Crème fraiche (optional)

Poached chicken:

1) In a large stock pot, combine chicken stock, breasts and/or thighs, vegetables and herbs. Place on medium to medium-high heat – try to keep the temperature of the liquid in the 150-160 Fahrenheit range, below even a bare simmer.
2) When the chicken reads 135 Fahrenheit on an instant thermometer (approx. 45-60 minutes), remove stock pot from heat. Remove chicken with tongs and place in a bowl or rimmed dish to cool and tent with foil.
3) Pour stock through a mesh sieve to remove the large vegetable chunks, skim with a very fine sieve to remove excess fat/scum. Discard solids and allow stock to cool.
4) When chicken is cool enough to handle, remove skin, bones and cartilage. Shred or dice, then store in the refrigerator until ready to make the filling.

Filling:

1) Combine gelatin with ¼ cup cooled stock and whisk vigorously to combine, then set aside to firm up.
2) In a large stock pot, melt butter over medium heat then whisk in flour until a thick roux forms. Stir with a silicone spatula or wooden spoon over medium heat until the roux is fragrant and beginning to develop some color, approx. 5 minutes. Add diced vegetables and continue stirring until vegetables soften and onion begins to turn translucent, 5-7 additional minutes.
3) Add white wine and reserved chicken stock, stirring constantly to maintain a smooth texture. Increase heat to medium-high, and as soon as the mixture begins to bubble remove from heat. Stir in stock/gelatin mixture until fully incorporated, followed by Maggi seasoning, then kosher salt and black pepper to taste.
4) Stir in poached chicken. At this point, the mixture can be refrigerated in a sealed container for up to 3 days, or frozen 3 months. Otherwise, divide into 2-cup ramekins for individual portions or a large casserole dish for family-style serving.

Biscuits:

1) Preheat oven to 400 Fahrenheit. Sift all-purpose flour into a large mixing bowl. Place Cheez-Its in a food processor and pulse until they reach a fine, consistent crumb texture. Add pulverized Cheez-Its to the bowl, along with baking powder. Whisk or toss to combine.
2) Add cold cubed butter to the bowl and toss. Working with your (EXTREMELY CLEAN, FRESHLY WASHED) hands, pinch each piece of butter flat and agitate the mixture until it begins to develop a clumpy texture. Pour in buttermilk and stir until a shaggy dough forms.

3) From Cheez-It biscuit dough into palm-sized pucks and place on top of the ramekins/casserole dish. Place dish(es) onto a parchment paper or silicone-lined baking sheet and bake. Biscuits should be golden brown and filling piping hot – ramekins will take approximately 25-40 minutes, casserole dish 45-60 minutes. Remove and let cool for 20-30 minutes before serving. Top with crème fraiche and additional Cheez-It crumbs. Leftovers will keep covered in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

Melinda Liles

Cheez The Day Apple Pie

Crust

3 Cups of ground Cheez Its

3 Tablespoons of sugar

3 Tablespoons of melted butter

Pie Filing

5 Cups of peeled, cored and sliced apples

2 Cups of sugar

1 Tablespoon of cinnamon

1 Tablespoon of corn starch

Crumb topping

½ Cup of sugar

¾ Cup of flour

5 Tablespoons of room temperature butter

¼ Cup of crumbled Cheez Its

Combine crust ingredients together and press to bottom of springform pan, bake at 325 x 12 minutes. Prepare the ingredients of the pie filling and pour over the crust. Combine the crumb ingredients and mix with a fork to form a rough crumb and sprinkle over the top of the apple pie filling. Bake pie at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Cheezy Turtle Crunch
Based on Saltine Cracker Toffee by Amy Flanigan on BellyFull.net website.

Makes 38 servings, a truly party-sized dish
Estimated start to finish time is 2.5 hours, but you aren't in the kitchen most of that time.

Ingredient list

- 2.5 cups of Cheez-Its in a flavor of your choice. Today 1 batch with white cheddar Cheez-Its and 1 batch with Original Cheez-Its are presented to illustrate the versatility of Cheez-Its.
- 1 cup of unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup finely chopped pecans

Preparation method

1. Prep your tools: Preheat oven to 375 F. Line a 10x15 jelly roll baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray. Place a small saucepan on the stove with mixing spoon. Make sure your fridge has space for the baking pan to rest flat and undisturbed.
2. Prep the Cheez-Its: Line up the Cheez-Its on the baking tray. Completely cover the pan with a single layer, tiling pan with the Cheez-Its in even rows and columns.
3. Cook the caramel sauce: In saucepan, heat butter and brown sugar over medium heat until butter is melted. When it begins to bubble, cook for 3 more minutes while stirring.
4. Caramel transfer: Working quickly but carefully, pour the caramel (made by the butter and brown sugar) evenly over the Cheez-It grid. You can spread the mixture a bit with your spoon, but try to get good coverage on the pour.
5. Bake in oven 7-8 minutes.
6. Chocolate step 1: With oven mitts on both hands to support your pan evenly, remove pan from oven, and sprinkle the chocolate chips evenly across the pan. If not melted after 2 minutes, put back in oven for 1 minute.
7. Chocolate step 2: Gently smooth the melted chocolate over the pan. The fewer motions you use to cover the whole pan, the smoother the result. Then sprinkle with pecans. Can substitute with colored sprinkles in holiday colors.
8. Chill step: Let stand 10-20 minutes until no longer piping hot and nearly set. Then transfer to the fridge and chill for 2 hours.
9. Place a large cutting board on kitchen counter. Peel the chilled Cheezy Turtle Crunch off of foil and break into pieces on the cutting board.
10. Arrange Cheezy Turtle Crunch pieces on a serving plate or store in air tight container.

Alexis Bell

Cheesy Chorizo Chompers

Slightly spicy meatballs brought together with a cheez itz flare!

Meatball:

1 ½ cup of Cheez Itz "Extra Cheesy"

1 egg

½ cup whole milk

1 tsp lemon shallot seasoning

½ tsp garlic powder

½ tsp onion powder

¼ cup chopped onion

¼ cup chopped green bell pepper

1 tsp Badia "Complete" seasoning

1 tsp Chicken and Tomato dry bouillon powder

¼ cup chopped green bell pepper

1 lb Ground pork chorizo sausage

¼ cup of block extra sharp cheddar (cut into 1 cm blocks)

½ cup bread flour

Chipotle Barbeque Sauce:

½ cup Sweet Baby Rays Barbeque Sauce "Sweet and Spicy"

2 tsp jarred chipotle pepper

2 tsp raw sugar

1 tbsp water

Cheesy Chorizo Chompers

Slightly spicy meatballs brought together with a cheez itz flare!

1. In one large bowl add Cheez Itz, milk, garlic powder, onion powder, lemon shallot seasoning, and egg. Leave standing for 5 minutes.
2. Cook in small pan, chopped onions and peppers with 1 tsp of avocado oil for 3 minutes or until tender.
3. Add complete seasoning and chicken and tomato bouillon powder, cook 1 additional minute and pull from heat.
4. Add cooled pan mixture to large bowl mixture and mix,
5. Mash mixture with garlic crush or potato masher.
6. Add half of mixture into blender cup.
7. Blend until relatively smooth.
8. Add blended mixture into mashed mixture and combine.
9. Fold in ground chorizo
10. Shape chorizo into 1-inch balls, adding in 2-3 cheese squares and cover all sides.
11. Place each ball onto plastic wrap with space in between.
12. Lightly cover with plastic wrap and place in freezer for at least 30 minutes.

13. For sauce, add barbeque sauce, sugar, chipotle sauce, and water to small shallow pan
14. Cook sauce to simmer on medium heat
15. Pull sauce and add to squeeze bottle once cooled

16. Heat oven to 350 degrees
17. Lay flour into wide bowl.
18. When ready to cook, pull from freezer, roll each ball into flour and shape roundly.
19. In wide oven safe skillet, place on medium heat and add 1 tbsp avocado oil.
20. Place balls in and leave to cook 3 minutes on initial side, 1 minute on all sides turning each individually
21. Once browned, place skillet into preheated oven cook until 145 degrees internally, around 15 minutes
22. Pull from oven and serve with sauce on top

Amy May

"CHEEZ-Y DOES IT" CHEEZ-IT Home Chef Challenge

Easy Cheez-y Chicken Cups

Ingredients:

Crust:

2 ½ cups Cheez-It Crumbs (Buffalo Wing flavor)

7 Tbsp. Butter, melted

Mix Cheez-It crumbs with melted butter until crumbly.

Spoon 2 Tbsp. mixture into each of 12 mini pie tins.

Pack crumbs firmly across bottom & up the sides.

Bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes.

Set aside to cool before filling.

Filling:

2 cups Chicken, cooked & shredded

½ cup Celery, fine chopped

½ cup Cucumber, fine chopped

1 cup Ranch Dressing

Put all ingredients into a medium bowl and mix until well combined.

Spoon into cooled crust & garnish as desired.

Matthew Danielson

3-2-1 Carolina Apple Bars

3 Types of Cheez-Its, 2 types of apples, 1 apple-cider butterscotch drizzle.

Tart Granny Smith and sweet Honeycrisp apples rest on a buttery Cheddar Jack and Original Cheez-It crust, finished with a light White Cheddar Cheez-It and pecan crumble and a drizzle of apple-cider butterscotch.

Yield: 4 generous bars | Serving size: 1 bar | Pan: 6-inch square metal baking pan

Timing: Allow 45–60 minutes for preparation, about 37–50 minutes total oven time, and at least 90 minutes cooling. Make the sauce during baking or cooling; cider reduction time varies with the pan and heat.

Ingredients for the blended crust

- ½ cup Original Cheez-It crackers
- ½ cup Cheddar Jack Cheez-It crackers
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons packed light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Ingredients for the apple filling

- 2 cups Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 cup Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons packed light brown sugar
- 2¾ teaspoons cornstarch
- 1½ teaspoons apple cider
- 1½ teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Small pinch ground nutmeg

Ingredients for the White Cheddar pecan crumble

Prepare the mixture below and scatter 4/5ths of the crumble evenly over the apples. For a thicker topping, add the remaining 1/5th.

- ¾ cup White Cheddar Cheez-It crackers
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup finely chopped pecans
- 2½ tablespoons unsalted butter, cold and cubed

Ingredients for apple-cider butterscotch

- ½ cup apple cider
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- Additional apple cider, only as needed to thin the cooled sauce, added 1 teaspoon at a time

Ingredients for the garnish

- Each serving receives
  - 1 Cheez-It cracker - White Cheddar, Cheddar Jack or Original
  - 1 toasted pecan half
  - 1 paper-thin fresh apple slice, optional

Patrick Falvey

Momma's Pimiento Cheese

8 oz extra sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

8 oz sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

4 oz cream cheese

½ cup honey roasted almonds, chopped

4 oz pimientos, chopped

¾ cup Cheez-it Bold and Spicy, crushed

¼ cup Cheez-it Smoked Cheddar, crushed

¾ cup mayonnaise

In a large bowl, mix the cheeses.

Add almonds, mixing well.

Add pimientos, mixing well.

Add both Cheez-it flavors, mixing well.

Add mayonnaise, mix well.

Help the flavors get happy together by refrigerating in air-tight container for at least 1 hour before serving.

Jennifer Morgan

Cheez-It Key Lime Pie

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes
Serving size: 1 slice
Servings: 8

Equipment

- 1 food processor or mortar and pestle
- 1 (9-inch) pie pan
- 1 stand mixer or immersion blender
- 2 mixing bowls

Crust Ingredients

- 4 cups Cheez-Its, crushed
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted

Filing Ingredients

- 28 oz sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup of key lime juice
- Zest of 4 key limes
- 2 egg yolks

Garnishes

- 3 key limes, sliced
- 1 cup Cheez-Its, crushed or whole

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F

Crust:

1. Crush Cheez-Its in a food processor or by hand using a mortar and pestle.
2. Add melted butter to Cheez-Its until combined.
3. Pour mixture into a 9-inch pie pan. Press evenly onto bottom and sides of the pan.
4. Bake crust for 8 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and set out to cool.

Filling:

1. Combine lime juice, sweetened condensed milk, sour cream, egg yolks, and lime zest in a large bowl using a mixer or immersion blender. Mix on medium for 2-3 minutes until combined evenly.

2. Pour the filling into the pie crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes until set. Pie should have a slight jiggle in the middle.
3. Refrigerate pie for at least four hours.

Garnishes:

1. Add crushed or whole Cheez-Its to the top of the pie for decoration.
2. Add sliced key limes to the top for decoration.

Serve and Store:

1. Slice pie and enjoy!
2. Store any leftovers in the refrigerator in a storage container.

Cheesy Cheez-It Crusted Chorizo Wontons

Crispy Cheez-It exterior filled with a cheesy chorizo mix,
caramelized onion, more Cheez-It and fresh cilantro.
Drizzled with creamy poblano sauce and hot honey bbq queso.
Garnished with queso fresco, fresh cilantro & lime zest
and served with more creamy poblano sauce.

Yield: 20–25 Wontons

Ingredients

Hot Honey BBQ Caramelized Onion

Ingredient	Amount
Red Onion, Thinly Sliced	2 oz
Poblano Pepper, Roasted / Peeled / De-Seeded / Fine Diced (See Note)	¾ oz
Garlic, Minced	2 cloves
Hot Honey BBQ Sauce	1.5 tbsp
EVOO or Butter	1 tsp
Kosher Salt	pinch

Chorizo Cheese Filling

Ingredient	Amount
Chorizo, Cooked & Crumbled	8 oz
Cream Cheese, Softened	5 oz
Pepper Jack, Shredded	3 oz
Queso Fresco, Crumbled	2 oz
Hot Honey BBQ Caramelized Onion, Finished	2.75 oz
Lime Juice	¾ tsp
Cheez-It Original, Crumbled	1 oz
Fresh Cilantro, Chopped	5 tbsp

Cheesy Cheez-It Crusted Chorizo Wontons

Cheez-It Breading

Ingredient	Amount
Cheez-It Original, Crushed	7 oz
Panko Breadcrumbs	½ cup
Chili Powder	1 tsp
Garlic Powder	1 tsp
Smoked Paprika	½ tsp
Ground Black Pepper	¼ tsp

Wash & Seal:

Ingredient	Amount
Eggs	2
Milk	2 tbsp
Cornstarch, For Dusting	1.5 tbsp
Cornstarch + Water, Sealing Slurry	1 tsp + 1 tsp

Frying:

Ingredient	Amount
Canola Oil, For Deep Frying	32-48 oz

Creamy Poblano Sauce

Ingredient	Amount
Mayonnaise	⅔ cup
Buttermilk	⅓ cup
Salsa Verde	2 oz
Pickled Jalapeño, Chopped	1.5 oz
Poblano Pepper, Roasted / Peeled / De-Seeded / Fine Diced (See Note)	1.5 oz
Fresh Cilantro, Chopped	4 tbsp

Cheesy Cheez-It Crusted Chorizo Wontons

Hot Honey BBQ Queso

Ingredient	Amount
Milk	7 Fl oz
Pepper Jack, Shredded	7 oz
Hot Honey BBQ Sauce	2 tbsp
Salt	½ tsp
Smoked Paprika	¼ tsp

Garnish

Ingredient	Amount
Queso Fresco, Crumbled	To Taste
Fresh Cilantro, Chopped	To Taste
Lime Zest	To Taste

Poblano Pepper Note: You need 2.25 oz of roasted / peeled / de-seeded poblano pepper total (¾ oz for the filling + 1.5 oz for the sauce). Roast 2 small poblano peppers to yield that amount.

Cheesy Cheez-It Crusted Chorizo Wontons

Method

1 — Hot Honey BBQ Caramelized Onion

1. Roast poblano peppers at 400°F for 20-25 min until blistered. Peel, de-seed, fine dice.
2. In a small (6–8") skillet over medium-low heat, add EVOO or butter.
3. Add sliced onion and pinch of salt. Cook 16 min, stirring every 4 min, until deep golden and jammy.
4. Add poblano pepper. Cook 8 min, stirring every 4 min.
5. Add garlic. Cook 2–3 min until fragrant.
6. Remove from heat. Stir in hot honey BBQ sauce. Set aside to cool completely.

2 — Chorizo Cheese Filling

1. In a large bowl, combine chorizo, cream cheese, pepper jack, queso fresco, caramelized onion mix, and lime juice. Mix until uniform.
2. Cover and chill 30 min.
3. Right before wrapping, fold in Cheez-It crumbs and cilantro.

3 — Cheez-It Breading

1. In a wide bowl, combine Cheez-It crumbs, panko, chili powder, garlic powder, smoked paprika, onion powder, and black pepper. Mix well.
2. In a separate shallow dish, beat eggs + milk.
3. In a third shallow dish, place cornstarch for dusting.
4. Mix 1 tsp cornstarch + 1 tsp water into a smooth slurry for sealing.

4 — Creamy Poblano Sauce

1. Add mayo, buttermilk, pickled jalapeño, salsa verde, and cilantro to a food processor.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Stir in diced poblano pepper.
4. Taste and adjust. Set aside (or chill until ready to serve).

5 — Hot Honey BBQ Pepper Jack Queso

1. In a saucepan, whisk milk, BBQ sauce, salt, and smoked paprika until fully dissolved.
2. Add shredded pepper jack.
3. Heat on medium-low, stirring constantly, until fully melted and smooth (~5–7 min). Do not let it boil.
4. Keep warm on lowest heat or in a double boiler for serving.

Cheesy Cheez-It Crusted Chorizo Wontons

6 — Assembly

1. Heat vegetable oil to 350°F in a deep fryer or deep pot.
2. Set up breading station: cornstarch → egg wash → breading mix, left to right.
3. Place 1 oz of filling in the center of a wonton wrapper.
4. Dab cornstarch slurry along two adjacent edges.
5. Fold diagonally into a triangle. Press out all air bubbles as you fold.
6. Dab a little slurry on one bottom corner and press firmly to seal.
7. Hold seam-side-down on a plate for 30 seconds to let the seal set.
8. Dust the exterior lightly with cornstarch. Tap off excess.
9. Dip in egg wash, coating all sides.
10. Press into breading mix, coating evenly.
11. Repeat for all wontons. Let them rest 5 min before frying.

7 — Fry

1. Fry in batches of 4–6 at 350°F for 3–4 min, until deep golden.
2. Between batches, let the oil recover to 350°F (30–60 sec).
3. Doneness test: pull one at 3 min, cut open — center should be 165°F+ and cream cheese fully melted.
4. Drain on a wire rack.

8 — Plating

1. Arrange wontons on a platter.
2. Drizzle the creamy poblano sauce.
3. Drizzle the hot honey BBQ queso.
4. Scatter queso fresco over the top.
5. Finish with fresh cilantro and a light grate of lime zest.
6. Serve immediately with the remaining creamy poblano sauce on the side for dipping.

Place any remaining wontons and sauces in sealed containers. Store in refrigerator. Reheat and enjoy any remaining wontons within 3-4 days and any remaining sauces within 5-7 days.

Marie Schoening

Cheezy Cheese-It Dutch Apple Pie

Delicious Cheese It crust with an open top

Crust:

1 Cup Cheese-It's finely crushed
8 Tablespoons water
1 Cup of All Purpose Flour
1/4 cup cold Butter

Mix all ingredients together - put in refrigerator for 15 min
Roll out, put in 9 in pie pan

Filling:
4 Cups peeled and sliced granny smith apples
3/4 Cup Sugar
1/2 teaspoon Cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
3/4 Cup Flour
1/2 Cup Brown Sugar
1 teaspoon Cinnamon
1/2 Cup Butter

Combine Apples, Sugar, Cinnamon and nutmeg. Put on pie crust,
Mix remaining ingredients until it makes coarse crumbs. Spread on top of apple mixture. Bake 425 degrees for 45 minutes.

Jennifer Currie

CHEEZ-Y Beer Cheese Loaded Grits

Southern staple with a Cheez-y twist

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quick grits – prepped according to package
- 1 pound sausage – browned
- 8 ounces bacon – chopped and cooked
- 8 ounces small shrimp – peeled and deveined.
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 (14 ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese – shredded - divided
- 2 cups Beer Cheese Cheez-Its – crushed - divided
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Prepare grits according to package directions.
2. Cook sausage and bacon – set aside.
3. In a small pot, bring 2 cups water to a boil. Cook shrimp for 30 seconds. Remove from water and set aside.
4. In a 4-quart (or larger) crock pot, combine grits, sausage, bacon, butter, and soup. Set temperature setting to low.
5. Stir in half of the cheese and 1 cup crushed Cheez-Its.
6. Season with salt and pepper and stir well.
7. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and Cheez-Its.
8. Cover and cook on low until cheese melts. Then turn down heat to "keep warm".

Jill Moore

Halloween Spider Web Toffee

3 cups original Cheez-its
1¼ cup unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1¼ cup light brown sugar, packed
1½ tsp. vanilla
1 (12-oz.) package semisweet chocolate chips (about 2 cups)
1 cup marshmallows
1 (3-oz.) package gummy candies shaped like worms or bugs
Small plastic spiders for decorating & serving (optional)

This recipe is based on the classic recipe for toffee made with saltine crackers, such as this one from Allrecipes.com: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/11376/saltine-toffee-cookies/

Serving size: 1-2 pieces of toffee. Makes about 2 dozen servings.

1. Preheat oven to 425.
2. Line a 15x10 rimmed baking sheet (or jelly roll pan) with aluminum foil and coat lightly with cooking spray. Fill baking sheet with cheez-its placed edge to edge, but not overlapping.
3. Melt butter and brown sugar in a heavy saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring until completely melted.
4. Increase heat to medium high. Bring mixture to a full boil and let boil for 3 minutes. Do not stir while it is boiling.
5. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.
6. Carefully pour the mixture over the cheez-its. Immediately transfer the pan to the preheated oven and bake for 5 minutes.
7. Remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over top. Put the pan back in the oven for exactly 1 minute to soften the chips, then remove from oven to a cooling rack and use a rubber spatula to spread the chocolate evenly over the toffee.
8. Let the toffee cool for 15-20 minutes, until it is cool enough that it won't melt the marshmallow but not completely set.
9. Place marshmallows in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave them for 20-25 seconds until they soften. Put on thin disposable gloves and grease the fingertips generously with cooking spray. Pull off a bit of marshmallow and stretch it into web-like strands. Place the strands on the toffee. Repeat until all of the toffee is covered with "web."
10. Place worm or bug candies at intervals on the web.
11. Refrigerate 2 hours, then cut or break into pieces (about 1½ to 2 inches square) to serve.
12. Optional: to serve, place toffee pieces on a platter or plate and decorate with plastic toy spiders.
13. May be stored in an air-tight container for up to 5 days at room temperature or up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

Karen LeRose

Cheez-It Happens

(Cheez-It Peanut Butter Bites)

Serving size 2 pieces, serves 28

Ingredients:

1 cup Cheez-Its
½ cup peanut butter
¼ cup butter, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
½ tsp vanilla
½ cup milk chocolate, melted

Instructions:

1. Make the filling. In a stand mixer, using the whisk attachment, beat the peanut butter and butter until smooth. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla and beat until incorporated.
2. Assemble the filling. Spoon ½ tsp of the peanut butter mixture onto one Cheez-It cracker and place another Cheez-It cracker on top, sandwiching the peanut butter mixture between the 2 crackers.
3. Chill. Firm up the filling by placing the prepared Cheez-it sandwiches into the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
4. Dip in chocolate. Melt the milk chocolate in the microwave until smooth. Place a dap of melted chocolate in a square candy mold. Place the chilled Cheez-It sandwich on top of the chocolate. Fill the rest of the mold with additional chocolate. Optional: hand dip each sandwich in melted chocolate and set on parchment paper to set.
5. Set the candy. Allow the chocolate to set-up on the counter at room temperature, or in the refrigerator.

Mary Doherty

MAC 'N CHEEZ-IT POT PIE

This is what can happen when creamy Mac 'n Cheese and crunchy Cheez-its find their way to get together...a golden brown shell filled with creamy mac 'n cheese topped with crunchy crushed Cheez-it crackers. Want to take it over the top??? Before adding the crunchy Cheez-It topping...just add a scoop of pulled pork BBQ, a drizzle of BBQ sauce then the crunchy Cheez-it topping...YUM...dig in and enjoy!

For today I have provided pulled pork BBQ and their mild sauce from Ole Time BBQ here in Raleigh.

Pie Dough
adapted from Americas Test Kitchen

Makes enough dough for four (4x2") pot pies

1 cup all purpose flour, plus more for work surface
1/4 cup finely crushed Original Cheez-it crackers plus 1 additional cup for topping
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1/4 cup, chilled vegetable shortening, cut into cubes
2 tablespoons cold vodka
2 tablespoons cold water

Directions

1. Process flour, salt and sugar together in food processor.

2. Add butter and shortening and process until dough starts to clump.

3. Sprinkle vodka and water over mixture and form into dough.

4. Wrap in plastic wrap chill for at least 45 minutes.

5. Divide chilled dough into 4 equal portions, flatten, then roll each portion into a 7" circle and fit into a 4x2" springform pan, pressing lightly to fit the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Chill dough in the freezer for about 15 minutes.

6. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and prebake crusts until golden brown.

6. Prepare Crunchy Cheeze-it topping and set aside to cool.

7. Prepare creamy mac n cheese filling.

Crunchy Cheez-Its

1 cup Original Cheez-it crackers, broken up into smaller pieces
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
fresh cracked black pepper to taste

Put Cheeze-its in a medium size bowl, pour melted butter on top, stir to combine, then spread out on parchment paper, add fresh cracked black pepper to taste. Set aside to cool.

Homemade Creamy Mac n Cheese

2 cups macaroni noodles, cooked
4 tablespoons butter
1 12 ounce can evaporated milk
3 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
4 ounces Velveeta cheese, cubed
salt and pepper to taste

1. In large saucepan, cook pasta according to package directions Drain and set noodles aside.

2. In same saucepan, add butter, milk, salt, pepper and heat over medium heat until hot but not boiling. Add Velveeta cheese and shredded cheese, whisk until smooth and creamy. Stir in cooked noodles.

Assemble pot pies.

Option 1: Fill shells with mac n cheese and top with Crunchy Cheez-its

Option 2: Fill shells with mac n cheese, a scoop of your favorite pulled pork BBQ, drizzle of BBQ sauce then top with Crunchy Cheez-It

Jennie Ingram

Cheez-it Peanut Butter Pie

Ingredients:

For the crust:
6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
¼ c granulated sugar
¾ c Cheez-its, crumbs
¾ c graham cracker crumbs

For the ganache:
½ c heavy cream
¾ c semi-sweet chocolate chips

For the filling:
3 tsp vanilla extract, divided
2 tbsp powdered sugar
2 c heavy cream, divided
¼ c brown sugar
¼ c granulated sugar
6 oz cream cheese, softened
1 c smooth peanut butter

Equipment needed:

Medium mixing bowl, large mixing bowl, saucepan, measuring cups, measuring spoons, food processor, hand or stand mixer, pie pan, plastic bag, piping bag, spoons, spatula

Preparation:

Prepare crust:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Process Cheez-its and graham crackers in food processor or crush them in a bag.
3. Prepare crust by mixing melted butter, granulated sugar, Cheez-it crumbs and graham cracker crumbs in a medium mixing bowl.
4. Press mixture into pie pan, going up the sides about ½-¾ of an inch.
5. Bake for 12 minutes.
6. Allow to cool completely.

Prepare ganache:

1. Warm cream in small saucepan over medium-low heat. Be careful not to scald.
2. Remove from heat.
3. Add chocolate chips and allow to sit for 5 minutes to melt.
4. Mix cream and chocolate chips until blended well.
5. Reserve 3 tbsp of ganache in a plastic bag for decorating.
6. Set aside to cool while preparing filling.

Prepare filling:

1. Mix 1 ½ c heavy cream, 2 tsp vanilla extract, and powdered sugar in large mixing bowl.
2. Whip until soft peaks form. Place in refrigerator while mixing other filling ingredients.
3. Mix cream cheese, brown sugar, granulated sugar, and 1 tsp of vanilla extract until blended.
4. Add peanut butter and mix well.
5. Add ½ c of heavy cream and mix well.

6. Remove whipped cream from step 2 from refrigerator and add ⅓ to the peanut butter mixture. Mix until well blended.
7. Add ⅓ of whipped cream to peanut butter mixture. Mix until well blended.
8. Reserve ½ of remaining whipped cream for garnish. Gently fold in what's left of the whipped cream, being careful not to over mix. Some white streaks are fine.

Assemble pie:

1. Pour ganache into cooled pie crust. Spread evenly, going up the sides ¼ to ½ inch if possible.
2. Allow to set for 10 minutes.
3. Spoon pie filling into prepared crust. Spread carefully so that ganache doesn't come out over the edge of the crust.
4. Use reserved ganache to drizzle over the top of the pie.
5. Refrigerate for 6 hours or overnight.
6. Before serving, pipe reserved whipped cream around the edges of the pie for decoration.
7. Sprinkle crumbled Cheez-its or crushed peanuts on whipped cream as desired.
8. Serve cold and enjoy!

Anna Brescia

The Great American Trash Cookie

Prep time: 15 minutes
Chill time: 30 minutes
Bake time: 10–12 minutes
Yield: ~ 12 cookies

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup crushed potato chips
- 1/2 cup Cheez-Its, roughly crushed, plus extra for topping
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- Flaky sea salt, if wanted

Instructions

Roughly crush the Cheez-Its and potato chips. You want a mix of small pieces and larger chunks for texture, rather than fine crumbs.

In a medium bowl, beat the softened butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar until creamy and well combined, about 2 minutes.

Add in the egg yolk and vanilla extract until smooth.

In a separate large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add to the butter mixture and stir just until no dry flour remains.

Gently fold in the Cheez-Its, chocolate chips, and potato chips. Reserve a few pieces of Cheez-Its for the tops.

Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. This helps the cookies hold their shape while baking.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Divide the dough into 12 equal portions, roughly 2 tablespoons each. Place them about 2 inches apart on the baking sheet. Press the reserved Cheez-its onto the tops.

Bake for 10–12 minutes, until the edges are lightly golden and the centers still look slightly soft. Avoid overbaking; they'll continue to set as they cool.

Let the cookies rest on the baking sheet for 5–10 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt if desired.