Savory Pesto Cheesecake

Serves 10 to 20 depending on the rest of the menu.
Recipe will fill three 4-inch springform pans, for minis.
Cheesecake can be frozen; to serve, simply defrost.

Walnut Basil Pesto

Ingredients	Directions
4 C fresh basil leaves (reserve some nice leaves to garnish the cheesecake) 2 C chopped walnuts, toasted 1 C parmesan cheese, grated or shredded 1 tsp kosher salt 2 C extra virgin olive oil	1. Put basil, walnuts, cheese, and salt in bowl of a food processor. Pulse several times, until mixture begins to break down. 2. While processor is on, slowly add olive oil. 3. Final product should be loose paste.

Cheesecake

Ingredients	Directions
1½ lbs cream cheese, room temperature, soft 3 eggs ½ C heavy cream 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper to taste 1 C pesto	1. Preheat oven to 350° and boil a kettle of water. 2. In the bowl of a food processor, combine cream cheese, eggs, cream, Worcestershire, and pesto. 3. Combine well and taste for seasoning. Add salt and pepper as needed. 4. Line bottom of 8-inch springform pan with parchment paper. Pour cheese mixture into pan. 5. Place pan in a larger baking dish. Pour boiling water into larger pan, until water is halfway up the side of the cake pan. 6. Bake 35 to 45 minutes. 7. Carefully remove cake pan from hot water and place on wire rack.
SAFETY TIP – don't try to move the larger dish when it's filled with hot water. Slide the oven rack out, put the baking dish and cake pan on the rack; then pour the hot water in and carefully slide the rack back into the oven. When it's done, lift the cake out of the water bath; leaving the large pan of hot water in the oven until it's cool enough to handle.	

Topping

Ingredients	Directions
1 C water 1 C (4 oz) dry sun-dried tomatoes (not in oil) ½ C raspberry preserves 1 envelope unflavored gelatin	1. Put tomatoes, preserves and 1 cup water in a small saucepan; bring to a boil and simmer, covered about 10 – 15 minutes, until tomatoes are soft. 2. Let mixture cool a bit; add ½ cup water. Place in bowl of food processor and whip until mixed. It will still be a little chunky. 3. Pour tomato mixture back into saucepan; heat until bubbles rise; stir to make sure mixture is hot all the way through. 4. Add gelatin; stir until it is completely dissolved. 5. Remove from heat.

Assemble and Unmold
1. Carefully spoon topping onto cake and spread evenly. Leave on wire rack to cool for about an hour; then move cake to refrigerator to cool completely through.
2. When cake is cool, run a knife around the edge to loosen it. Unhinge the pan and lift from cake. Carefully run a knife underneath the parchment paper to release and slide the cheesecake onto a serving platter.
3. Garnish with basil leaves and sliced cherry tomatoes. Serve with crackers or baguette.