

Crispy Mini Taco Cupcakes with Hash Brown Crust

The Best Mini Taco Cupcakes with a Crispy Potato Crust



OVEN
350°F

TIME
18 min

METHOD
Air fryer

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

For the Potato Crust (The Shell):

2 cups frozen hash browns: Shredded potatoes work best. Ensure they are thawed and patted completely dry.

1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese: This acts as the "glue" for your crust.

2 tablespoons melted butter: For that golden-brown finish and rich flavor.

Salt and pepper: To taste.

For the Savory Taco Filling:

1/2 lb ground meat: Ground beef is classic, but ground chicken or turkey works beautifully.

1/2 small onion: Finely chopped to blend into the meat.

1 clove garlic: Minced.

2 teaspoons taco seasoning: Use your favorite store-bought or homemade blend.

2 tablespoons tomato paste: This adds depth and helps the meat stay together.

1/4 cup water: To create a light sauce.

Salt: To taste.

Toppings:

1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese: For the final melt.

Garnish: Sour cream, diced tomatoes, chopped green onions, and fresh cilantro.

Swaps and Notes:

Meat Alternatives: If you want a leaner option, ground turkey or chicken is fantastic. For

vegetarians, black beans or a meat substitute works just as well.

Cheese: Pepper jack is a great swap if you want a little more kick.

The Potatoes: If you can't find frozen hash browns, you can grate fresh russet potatoes, but you must squeeze out every drop of moisture using a kitchen towel, or the crust will be soggy.

Step-by-Step Directions:

1. Prepare the Potato Crusts:
2. Blind Bake the Shells:
3. SautØ the Filling:
4. Assemble and Final Bake:
5. Top and Serve:

Tips for Success:

Dry the Potatoes: I cannot stress this enough. If the hash browns are wet, the crust will steam instead of fry, resulting in a mushy cupcake.

Don't Overfill: Keep the meat level just below the top of the potato rim to prevent the cheese from spilling over and sticking to the pan.

Silicone Muffin Pans: If you have one, use it! It makes popping these out a breeze without any breakage.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Cupcake):

Calories: 145 kcal

Protein: 9g

Carbohydrates: 8g

DIRECTIONS

1. **Prepare the Potato Crusts:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (180°C). Generously grease a 12-cup muffin tin with cooking spray or butter. In a medium bowl, combine the thawed and dried hash browns, 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, melted butter, salt, and pepper. Press about 2 tablespoons of the mixture into the bottom of each muffin cup, pushing it slightly up the sides to create a "nest."
2. **Blind Bake the Shells:** Bake the potato shells for 15-18 minutes. You want them to be golden and starting to crisp at the edges. Once done, remove from the oven and let them cool slightly while you prep the meat.
3. **SautØ the Filling:** In a skillet over medium heat, brown your ground meat until no pink remains. Drain any excess grease. Stir in the onions and garlic, cooking for another 2 minutes until softened. Add the taco seasoning, tomato paste, and water. Simmer for about 5 minutes until the liquid has reduced and the mixture is thick and glossy.
4. **Assemble and Final Bake:** Spoon the taco meat evenly into each of the pre-baked potato shells. Sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup of shredded cheddar over the tops. Return the tin to the oven for 5-7 minutes. You are looking for the cheese to be bubbly and the potato edges to be extra crispy.
5. **Top and Serve:** Let the cupcakes rest in the tin for 3-5 minutes-this helps the crust set so they don't fall apart. Gently lift them out using a butter knife. Top with a dollop of sour cream, tomatoes, and onions right before serving.
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7. Don't : Overfill: Keep the meat level just below the top of the potato rim to prevent the cheese from spilling over and sticking to the pan.
8. Silicone : Muffin Pans: If you have one, use it! It makes popping these out a breeze without any breakage.
9. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: These are a fantastic appetizer for a larger Mexican spread. I love serving these alongside a big bowl of Beer Cheese Dipor as a side to a hearty Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole.
10. If you are hosting a party, try pairing them with other "easy-to-grab" snacks like Totchos.
11. Nutritional Information (Per Cupcake): Calories: 145 kcal
12. Protein: 9g
13. Carbohydrates: 8g
14. Fat: 9g
15. Fiber: 1g
16. Storage and Leftover Tips: To Store: Keep leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.
17. To Reheat: Avoid the microwave if possible, as it makes the potato crust soft. Instead, pop them back into a 350°F oven or an air fryer for 4-5 minutes until the crust crisps back up.
18. Freezing: These freeze surprisingly well! Freeze them on a baking sheet first, then transfer to a freezer bag. Reheat directly from frozen in the oven.
19. More Recipes You Will Love: Walking Taco Bar for Crowds
20. Sheet : Pan Quesadillas
21. Ultimate : Party Totchos
22. Final Thoughts: These Mini Taco Cupcakes are always the first thing to disappear at my house. They take the best parts of a taco and combine them with the comfort of a crispy potato skin. Give them a try for your next gathering!
23. Did you make this recipe? I'd love to hear how they turned out! Leave a comment below or tag us on social media. Don't forget to follow Chefmaniac for more easy weeknight wins.

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