

Potato Nests with Peas, Ham and Cream Cheese

Yield: 36 nests

Ingredients:

Non-stick cooking spray

2 thick slices deli ham (about 4 ounces total but for a vegetarian option you can leave out)

16 ounces (about 3 1/2 cups) frozen shredded hash browns, thawed (about half of a 30-ounce bag)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

Finely grated zest of one lemon

2 tablespoons milk

1/4 cup frozen peas

2 tablespoon chopped chives (1/2-inch pieces)

Paprika, for serving

Directions:

1. Position two racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and preheat to 425 degrees F. Spray a 12-cup and a 24-cup mini muffin tin with cooking spray and set aside.
2. Cut the ham into small matchsticks similar in size to the hash browns. Set aside and reserve 1/3 cup of the ham. Mix the remaining ham, hash browns, 1 teaspoon salt and some pepper in a large bowl. Divide the mixture evenly among the sprayed cups, using about 1 rounded tablespoon each. Press the mixture in a thin layer across the bottom and up the sides of each cup to make a nest, leaving the edges uneven and jagged.
3. Bake, rotating the pans halfway through, until the nests are dark brown around the tips and golden and crisp on the outside, about 25 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, beat the cream cheese, lemon zest, milk 1/2 teaspoon salt, and some pepper together in a medium bowl with an electric mixer on medium-high speed. Scrape the mixture into a resealable plastic bag, cut off the tip and set aside.

