

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 15 minutes
- Chilling Time: 10 minutes
- Total Time: 40 minutes
- Yield: 24 bites
- Difficulty: Easy
- Intensity Level: Low to Medium
- Culinary Skill Required: Basic baking & piping

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Equipment Needed

- 24-cup mini muffin tin
- Standard hand mixer or stand mixer with paddle attachment
- Medium mixing bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Piping bag or small zip-top bag
- Pastry brush
- Round cookie cutter (2.5-inch diameter)

Ingredients

Pastry Crust

- 1 sheet (approx. 8-9 oz / 250g) puff pastry or refrigerated crescent dough sheet, thawed but chilled
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter, melted (for brushing the tin)

Cream Cheese Filling

- 8 oz (225g) full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 3 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 large egg yolk (room temperature)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp fresh lemon zest

Raspberry Layer

- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries (or 24 small individual berries)

- 3 tbsp high-quality seedless raspberry preserves or jam

Garnish (Optional)

- 1 tbsp powdered sugar for dusting
- Fresh mint leaves for garnish

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep the Oven and Pan

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) with a rack positioned in the center. Lightly grease a 24-cup mini muffin tin with melted butter or non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.

Step 2: Prepare the Pastry Base

Lightly flour a clean work surface. Roll out your thawed puff pastry or crescent sheet gently to smooth any seams. Using a 2.5-inch round cookie cutter (or the rim of a wide glass), cut out 24 dough rounds. Gently press each round into the bottom and up the sides of the greased mini muffin cups to form small dough cups. Place the tin in the refrigerator while preparing the filling to keep the dough cold and flaky.

Step 3: Whip the Cream Cheese Filling

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the softened cream cheese and granulated sugar. Beat on medium speed with a hand mixer for about 1–2 minutes until completely smooth, creamy, and free of lumps. Add the egg yolk, vanilla extract, and fresh lemon zest. Mix on low speed just until fully combined and velvety. Transfer the filling into a piping bag or a zip-top bag

with the corner snipped off.

Step 4: Assemble the Bites

Remove the chilled muffin tin from the fridge. Spoon about 1/2 teaspoon of raspberry preserves into the bottom of each pastry cup. Pipe or spoon the cream cheese mixture on top of the jam layer, filling each cup about 3/4 full. Top each bite with one small fresh raspberry, pressing it gently into the center of the cream cheese filling.

Step 5: Bake to Golden Perfection

Bake at 375°F (190°C) for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the pastry edges are puffed and deeply golden brown, and the cream cheese center is set with a soft bounce.

Step 6: Cool and Serve

Remove the muffin tin from the oven and set it on a wire cooling rack for 10 minutes. Gently run a small offset spatula or butter knife around the edges of each bite to pop them out. Dust lightly with powdered sugar right before serving. Serve warm or thoroughly chilled.

Cooking Intensities & Thermal Management

Maintaining proper temperature control is crucial to achieving crisp pastry layers and a silky cream cheese interior:

- **Ingredient Temperatures (Low Heat / Room Temp):** Your cream cheese must be thoroughly softened at room temperature (~70°F / 21°C) before beating. Cold cream cheese causes persistent lumps that over-mixing cannot easily fix. Conversely, keep your pastry dough cold until the moment it enters the oven to preserve butter layering for maximum puff.
- **Baking Thermal Intensity (Medium-High Heat):** Baking at 375°F (190°C) delivers

sufficient quick heat to steam the water in the pastry layers, puffing the crust before the cream cheese filling overcooks or splits.

- **Cooling Phase (Low Intensity):** Allow a mandatory 10-minute rest in the pan at ambient room temperature. Removing hot bites immediately will cause the delicate pastry walls to collapse.

Chef's Tips for Success

- **Prevent Soggy Bottoms:** Adding a tiny layer of jam beneath the cream cheese acts as a flavorful moisture barrier between the filling and the dough base.
- **Fresh vs. Frozen Berries:** Fresh raspberries yield the cleanest appearance. If using frozen raspberries, do not thaw them prior to baking to avoid excess juice bleeding into the cream cheese filling.
- **Storage:** Store leftover bites in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Reheat in a preheated 350°F (175°C) oven or air fryer for 3–4 minutes to restore crispness, or enjoy cold straight from the fridge.

Nutritional Information

Servings: 24 bites | *Serving Size:* 1 bite

Metric	Amount Per Serving
Calories	78 kcal
Total Fat	5.2 g

Metric	Amount Per Serving
<i>Saturated Fat</i>	2.6 g
<i>Trans Fat</i>	0.0 g
Cholesterol	18 mg
Sodium	48 mg
Total Carbohydrates	6.8 g
<i>Dietary Fiber</i>	0.4 g
<i>Total Sugars</i>	3.1 g
Protein	1.4 g
Vitamin D	0.1 mcg
Calcium	14 mg
Iron	0.3 mg
Potassium	22 mg