From the kitchen of
The Ponderosa Lodge Farm &
Bed & Breakfast
www.theponderosalodge.com

Black Forest Cherry Cheesecake
Dark, sweet cherries offset the filling and crust for a dramatic look and the best taste.

Cherry topping:
2 cups pitted dark sweet cherries
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Crust:
1 1/3 cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs (about 9 1/2 cookie sheets)
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon butter or stick margarine, melted
1 large egg white
Cooking spray

Filling:
1 cup fat-free sour cream
1/2 cup fat-free sweetened condensed milk
1 (8-ounce) block 1/3-less-fat cream cheese, softened
1 (8-ounce) block fat-free cream cheese, softened
1 1/4 cups sugar
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 large eggs
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate minichips
36 dark sweet cherries, pitted and halved

To prepare the cherry topping, place 2 cups cherries in a blender or food processor, and process until smooth. Combine the pureed cherries, 1/4 cup sugar, lemon juice, and cornstarch in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour cherry topping into a bowl; cover and chill.

Preheat oven to 350°.

To prepare the crust, combine crumbs, 1/4 cup sugar, butter, and egg white in a bowl; toss with a fork until well-blended. Press crumb mixture into the bottom of a 10-inch springform pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes; cool on a wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 300°.

To prepare the filling, combine sour cream, milk, and cheeses in a large bowl. Beat at medium speed of a mixer until well-blended. Add 1 1/4 cups sugar, cocoa, vanilla, and eggs; beat well. Stir in minichips. Pour cheese mixture into prepared pan. Bake at 300° for 50 minutes or until almost set (center will not be firm, but will set up as it chills). Turn oven off; cool cheesecake in closed oven 40 minutes. Remove from oven; cool on a wire rack. Spread cherry topping over cheesecake. Top with cherry halves. Cover and chill 8 hours.