

# Raspberry Swirl Lemon Bars •

## Ingredients

Fresh raspberries .....	1½ cups	Meyer lemons .....	3
Granulated sugar .....	1 cup	Mexican vanilla .....	½ tsp.
Baking flour .....	1¼ cups	Eggs .....	3
Almond flour, finely ground ..	3 Tbsp.	Egg yolk .....	1
Cornstarch .....	3 Tbsp. + 1 tsp.	TrueLemon powder .....	2 tsp.
Powdered sugar .....	½ cup	Salt .....	¾ tsp.
Kerrygold butter .....	16 Tbsp.	Powdered sugar .....	for dusting
		Flaky salt .....	for sprinkling

## Raspberry Reduction

Zest all 3 Meyer lemons; set aside zest from 1 lemon in *Small Bowl #1* (for crust) and zest from 2 lemons in *Small Bowl #2* (for curd) — Juice all 3 lemons to yield ½ cup + 2 tsp. juice; reserve 2 tsp. for reduction and ½ cup in *Small Bowl #3* (for curd)

1. Combine 1½ cups **fresh raspberries**, ¼ cup **granulated sugar**, 2 tsp. **lemon juice**, and ¼ tsp. **salt** in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, crushing **berries** with a wooden spoon as they soften. Cook for *3-4 minutes* until berries have broken down completely.
2. Press mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into *Small Bowl #4*, using a silicone spatula to extract all liquid and leave seeds behind. Discard seeds. You should have about ¾ cup strained raspberry liquid.
3. Return strained liquid to the saucepan. Mix 1 tsp. **cornstarch** with 1 tsp. cold water in a small cup until smooth. Whisk cornstarch slurry into **raspberry liquid**.
4. Simmer over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until mixture is reduced by half and has thickened to a honey-like consistency, about *8-10 minutes*. The reduction should coat the back of a spoon thickly and mound slightly when dripped. It will thicken further as it cools.
5. Transfer to *Small Bowl #5* and let cool to room temperature, about *30 minutes*. Stir occasionally to prevent skin formation. Once cooled, transfer to a piping bag or squeeze bottle with a small round tip. Set aside until ready to use.

## *Raspberry Swirl Lemon Bars*

### **Shortbread Crust**

Preheat oven to  $350^{\circ}\text{F}$  — Line 8 inch  $\times$  8 inch pan with parchment paper, leaving overhang — Bring 10 Tbsp. **butter** to room temperature

1. In *Medium Bowl #1*, whisk together  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups **gluten free flour**, 3 Tbsp. **almond flour**, 2 Tbsp. **cornstarch**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **powdered sugar**, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **salt**. Add 10 Tbsp. softened **butter**, **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #1*), and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **vanilla extract**. Mix with a fork or your hands until mixture forms clumps and holds together when pressed.
2. Press dough evenly into prepared pan, creating a uniform  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick layer. Use the bottom of a measuring cup to compact and smooth the surface. Dock the crust all over with a fork.
3. Bake at  $350^{\circ}\text{F}$  for 20-25 minutes until edges are golden brown and center is set. Remove from oven and reduce temperature to  $325^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

### **Lemon Curd**

Cut 6 Tbsp. **butter** into tablespoon pieces; set aside in *Small Bowl #6*

1. While crust bakes, whisk together  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup **granulated sugar** and 1 tsp. **cornstarch** in a medium saucepan. Add **eggs** and **egg yolk**, whisking until smooth.
2. Add **lemon juice** ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, *Small Bowl #3*), **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #2*), 2 tsp. **TrueLemon powder**, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **salt**. Whisk to combine.
3. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a silicone spatula or wooden spoon, scraping the bottom and sides of the pan. Cook until mixture thickens noticeably and reaches  $170^{\circ}\text{F}$ , about 8-10 minutes. The curd should coat the back of a spoon and leave a clear trail when you draw your finger through it.
4. Remove from heat and immediately stir in 6 Tbsp. **butter** (*Small Bowl #6*), one piece at a time, until fully incorporated and smooth.
5. Strain the hot curd through a fine-mesh sieve into *Small Bowl #7* to remove **zest** bits and any cooked egg pieces.

## *Raspberry Swirl Lemon Bars*

### **Assembly and Baking**

1. Pour strained curd onto the hot pre-baked crust, spreading gently to edges if needed.
2. Immediately pipe **raspberry reduction** (*Small Bowl #5*) in desired pattern on the surface of the **lemon curd**. Optionally drag a toothpick through the lines to create a marbled effect.
3. Bake at  $325^{\circ}\text{F}$  for *15-18 minutes* until filling is set but still jiggles slightly in the center when gently shaken. The **raspberry reduction** will set into the curd, creating a beautiful burgundy accent.

### **Finishing**

1. Cool completely in the pan on a wire rack for *1 hour*, then refrigerate for at least *3 hours* or overnight.
2. Use parchment overhang to lift bars from pan. Cut into 16 squares using a sharp knife, wiping blade clean between cuts.
3. Just before serving, dust moderately with **powdered sugar** and sprinkle lightly with **flaky sea salt**.

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## Equipment Required

- 8x8 inch baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Small saucepan (1-quart capacity, for raspberry reduction)
- Medium saucepan (2-quart capacity, for lemon curd)
- Medium mixing bowl (for crust)
- Fine-mesh sieve or strainer (for straining raspberries and lemon curd)
- Piping bag or squeeze bottle with small round tip
- Silicone spatula or wooden spoon
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for zest)
- Citrus juicer or reamer (for juicing lemons)
- Fork (for docking crust)
- Instant-read thermometer (optional but helpful)
- Toothpick (optional, for swirling)
- Sharp knife for cutting
- Wire cooling rack

## Mise en Place

- *Small Bowl #1* — lemon zest from 1 lemon (for crust)
- *Small Bowl #2* — lemon zest from 2 lemons (for curd)
- *Small Bowl #3* — lemon juice ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup from 3 lemons, for curd)
- *Small Bowl #4* — strained raspberry liquid (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)
- *Small Bowl #5* — cooled raspberry reduction in piping bag (ready to pipe)
- *Small Bowl #6* — 6 Tbsp. butter cut into pieces (for curd)

- *Small Bowl #7* — strained lemon curd (ready to pour)
- *Medium Bowl #1* — crust dry ingredients mixed with butter
- Zest all **Meyer lemons** before juicing (zest 1 for crust, zest 2 for curd, then juice all 3 for  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup + 2 tsp.)
- Reserve 2 tsp. **lemon juice** for raspberry reduction; remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup goes in *Small Bowl #3*
- Make **raspberry reduction** first; allow 30 minutes to cool to room temperature
- Bring 10 Tbsp. **butter** to room temperature for crust (*1 hour*)
- Line pan with parchment before starting
- Have all ingredients measured and ready
- Set up fine-mesh sieve over bowl for straining lemon curd
- Prepare piping bag or squeeze bottle with small round tip for raspberry reduction

## Ingredient Tips

- Fresh **raspberries** should be ripe but not mushy; frozen raspberries work in a pinch but yield slightly more liquid
- Bob's Red Mill 1:1 G.F. flour works best; other blends may need adjustment
- **Almond flour** should be finely ground (blanched almond flour, not almond meal)
- European-style **butter** (Kerrygold, Plugrá) has higher fat content and richer flavor
- Use fresh **Meyer lemons**; zest before juicing, and 3 lemons yield about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup juice

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- TrueLemon powder significantly amplifies lemon brightness without added liquid
- Fresh **lemon zest** is essential for aromatic oils and complexity
- Use the finest grater for **zest** to avoid bitter white pith

### Preparation Tips

- Strain **raspberry** seeds thoroughly; any seeds in the reduction will clog piping tip
- Test reduction consistency when cool—it should be thick like honey but still flow smoothly through piping tip
- If reduction is too thick after cooling, warm slightly and thin with 1 tsp. water at a time
- Press crust very firmly and evenly; uneven thickness causes uneven baking
- Dock crust thoroughly to prevent bubbling during baking
- Don't underbake the crust; edges should be golden for structural integrity
- Stir curd constantly to prevent curdling; use silicone spatula to scrape sides
- Watch for  $170^{\circ}\text{F}$  on thermometer or coat-the-spoon consistency
- Strain while curd is hot for easiest flow through sieve
- Pour curd onto hot crust immediately after straining
- Pipe **raspberry reduction** immediately after pouring lemon curd, before it begins to set
- Use thin, elegant lines or loops—less is more for visual impact

- The **raspberry** will deepen to burgundy during baking; this is normal and beautiful
- The filling will continue to set as it cools; slight jiggle is correct
- Clean knife between cuts for neat edges
- Add **powdered sugar** and **salt** just before serving to prevent dissolving

### Make Ahead & Storage

- **Raspberry reduction** can be made up to 3 days ahead; store covered in refrigerator and bring to room temperature before using
- Bars must cool completely and chill at least 3 hours before cutting
- Best made a day ahead; flavors meld and texture improves overnight
- Store covered in refrigerator for up to 5 days; bring to cool room temperature before serving for best texture (15-20 minutes)
- Can be frozen unfrosted for up to 2 months; thaw in refrigerator overnight
- For meal prep, cut and store individually wrapped in refrigerator

### Serving Suggestions

- Serve as elegant finger food dessert at room temperature
- Pair with hot tea, coffee, or sparkling wine
- Garnish individual servings with fresh mint, candied lemon peel, or fresh raspberries
- Serve alongside fresh berries or whipped cream for plated dessert
- The **flaky salt** provides crucial sweet-savory contrast