

# Raspberry Swirl Lemon Bars •

## Ingredients

Fresh raspberries .....	1½ cups	Meyer lemons .....	3
Granulated sugar .....	1 cup	Mexican vanilla extract .....	½ tsp.
Gluten-free flour .....	1 cup	Eggs .....	3
Almond flour, finely ground ..	2 Tbsp.	Egg yolk .....	1
Cornstarch .....	3 Tbsp. + 1 tsp.	TrueLemon powder .....	2 tsp.
Powdered sugar .....	⅓ cup	Salt .....	¾ tsp.
Kerrygold butter .....	14 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: berries should be fully soft and pulpy with no whole berries remaining, and the mixture should be bubbling gently throughout.
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.

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5. Transfer to *Small Bowl #5* and let cool to room temperature, about *30 minutes*. Stir occasionally to prevent skin formation. The reduction is ready when the bowl feels cool to the touch (not warm) and the reduction has thickened to a honey-like consistency that flows slowly. Once cooled, transfer to a piping bag or squeeze bottle with a small round tip. Set aside until ready to use.

## Shortbread Crust

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

1. In *Medium Bowl #1*, whisk together 1 cup **gluten free flour**, 2 Tbsp. **almond flour**, 2 Tbsp. **cornstarch**,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup **powdered sugar**, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **salt**. Add 8 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  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 *22-28 minutes* until crust is done: edges are medium golden brown, center is light golden and appears dry/matte (not sticky or soft), and surface feels firm when gently pressed. The crust should be fully set throughout. 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 is done when it reaches  $170^{\circ}\text{F}$  on an instant-read thermometer, or when it coats the back of a spoon thickly and leaves a clear trail when you draw your finger through it (the trail should not immediately fill in). The mixture should have the consistency of thick pudding and should not look watery or thin.
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.

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### **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: edges should be firm and pull slightly away from the pan sides, center should jiggle slightly when gently shaken (like a creamy custard, not liquid), and surface should appear matte (not shiny) with no wet spots. The **raspberry reduction** will set into the curd, creating a beautiful burgundy accent. If center still looks wet or sloshes, continue baking in *2 minute* increments.

### **Finishing**

1. Cool completely in the pan on a wire rack for *1 hour* (pan should feel cool to the touch, not warm), then refrigerate for at least *3 hours* or overnight (filling should be firm throughout when ready to cut).
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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## Yield

- Makes 16 squares (8x8 inch pan)
- Serves 8-12 as dessert

## 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 8 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

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- Use fresh **Meyer lemons**; zest before juicing, and 3 lemons yield about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup juice
- **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
- 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

### 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; it's done when edges are medium golden brown, center is light golden and appears dry/matte (not sticky), and surface feels firm when gently pressed. Fully baked crust is essential for structural integrity and prevents sogginess from the filling
- 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

### 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

### *Raspberry Swirl Lemon Bars*

- Serve alongside fresh berries or whipped cream for plated dessert
- The **flaky salt** provides crucial sweet-savory contrast