



Lemon Bars

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Lemon bars are pretty easy to make, but that doesn't mean it's easy to get them just the way you want them. Whether from bakeries or home recipes, the crust is often quite soggy, and many versions are too sweet and lack true lemon flavor. The warm filling must be added to a warm crust. Start preparing the filling when the crust goes into the oven. Be sure to cool the bars completely before cutting them.—**Editors of Cook's Illustrated**

LEMON BARS RECIPE

Quick Glance

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Makes 16 bars

INGREDIENTS

For the crust

1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, plus more to decorate the finished bars

1/2 teaspoon salt

8 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened but still cool, cut into 1-inch pieces



For the lemon filling

7 large egg yolks, plus 2 large eggs

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

2/3 cup lemon juice (from 4 or 5 medium lemons), plus 1/4 cup finely grated zest

Pinch of salt

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces

3 tablespoons heavy cream

Confectioners' sugar, optional



DIRECTIONS

Make the crust

1. Spray a 9-inch square baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Fold two 16-inch pieces of foil or parchment paper lengthwise to measure 9 inches wide. Fit 1 sheet in the bottom of the greased pan, pushing it into the corners and up the sides of the pan (overhang will help in removal of baked bars). Fit the second sheet in the pan in the same manner, perpendicular to the first sheet. Spray the sheets with nonstick cooking spray.

2. Place the flour, confectioners' sugar, and salt in a food processor and process briefly. Add the butter and process to blend, 8 to 10 seconds, then process until the mixture is pale yellow and resembles coarse meal, about three 1-second pulses. Sprinkle the mixture into the prepared pan and press firmly with your fingers into an even layer over the entire pan bottom. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

3. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Bake the crust until golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Make the filling

4. In a medium non-reactive bowl, whisk together the yolks and whole eggs until combined, about 5 seconds. Add the granulated sugar and whisk until just combined, about 5 seconds. Add the lemon juice, zest, and salt; whisk until combined, about 5 seconds. Transfer the mixture to a medium non-reactive saucepan, add the butter pieces, and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the curd thickens to a thin sauce-like consistency and registers 170°F (76°C) on an instant-read thermometer, about 5 minutes. Immediately pour the curd through a single-mesh stainless steel strainer set over a clean non-reactive bowl. Stir in the heavy cream; pour the curd into the warm crust immediately.

5. Bake until the filling is shiny and opaque and the center 3 inches jiggle slightly when shaken, 10 to 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack to room temperature, about 45 minutes. Remove the bars from the pan using the foil or parchment handles and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into 2 1/2 inch squares, wiping the knife clean between cuts as necessary. Sieve confectioners' sugar over the bars, if desired.

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