

Triple Lemon Cake

Making the lemon curd (for the lemon mousse):

Yield: 2 ½ cups

- 3 large eggs
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1 cup minus 1 Tbsp sugar
- ¾ cup freshly squeezed/strained lemon juice
- 6 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces

Fill a large bowl approximately halfway with ice and water and set aside. Fill the bottom of a double boiler with water at least 2 inches, but not full enough to touch the underside of the top double boiler and bring to a boil.

Place the eggs, egg yolks and sugar into the top of the double boiler (off of the heat) and whisk until blended. Add the lemon juice and mix well. Reduce the heat to medium low until the water comes to a gentle boil. Place the egg mixture over the water and heat, whisking constantly and scraping the edges frequently with a spatula (so that the eggs don't scramble) until the curd is very thick, about 7 minutes. The curd should coat the back of a spoon when ready or hold a distinct shape on the surface when the curd is lifted and falls back into the bowl.

Push the curd through a fine strainer with a spatula into a medium sized bowl. Add the cold pieces of butter, letting it sit for a minute and then mixing until combined. Once all of the butter is melted and incorporated, place the medium sized bowl over the large bowl filled with ice water and let sit until the curd is completely cool. Once cooled, place plastic wrap directly on the surface of the curd and refrigerate 4 hours to overnight before preparing the mousse.

This recipe makes a little extra lemon curd, but I assure you it won't go to waste! Lemon curd is amazing with scones, fruit or simply enjoyed with a spoon.

Making the cake:

Yield: (3) 9" layers

1 cup	unsalted butter, softened
4	large eggs, room temperature
2 1/3 cups	all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp	baking powder (-1/8 tsp for high altitude)
1/2 tsp	baking soda
1/4 tsp	salt
2 cups	granulated sugar
2 Tbsp	grated lemon zest (from about 2 lemons)
2 Tbsp	freshly squeezed/strained lemon juice
1 cup	buttermilk (+2 Tbsp for high altitude)

Grease and lightly flour (3) 9" cake pans. After greasing the pans, I like to place a piece of parchment paper cut to size in each pan. Then I grease the parchment and lightly flour the pan. This really aids in the easy removal of the cake.

Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter on medium speed for about 30 seconds. Add the sugar, lemon zest and lemon juice and beat until combined. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the flour and buttermilk, alternately, starting and ending with the flour mixture. Make sure to beat on low speed (unless you want to wear the flour) and beat until each addition is well combined. Pour evenly into the prepared pans. I use a scale for this step so that I can assure evenly sized cake layers.

Bake at 350 degrees F (325 degrees at high altitude) for about 25-27 minutes (or until a toothpick comes out clean) making sure to rotate the pans during baking for even browning. As anxious as you may get, please don't open the oven door before 20 minutes have passed. I have been cursed with many a sinking cake out of pure impatience! Remove from oven and let the cakes cool on a rack, in their pans for about 10 minutes. Run a knife gently around the edges of the cake and remove from pan. Let cool completely and refrigerate before filling and frosting. Prior to refrigerating you can also

brush the cakes with a simple syrup. This step adds moisture to the cake and greatly enhances the flavor.

Making the simple syrup:

½ cup	water
½ cup	granulated sugar
1/3 cup	freshly squeezed/strained lemon juice
2 tsp	vanilla extract

Combine water and sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high heat stirring until the sugar dissolves and the mixture comes to a boil. Remove from the heat and add the lemon juice and vanilla. Brush the warm mixture over the cooled cakes before filling.

Cake recipe adapted from Better Homes and Gardens

Making the lemon mousse:

Yield: 4 ½ cups mousse

1 ½ cups	lemon curd (see recipe above)
1 ½ cups	heavy whipping cream, cold
2 Tbsp	confectioner's sugar

Whip the heavy whipping cream and sugar on high speed with a whisk attachment until stiff peaks form. Gently fold the lemon curd into the whipped cream until just combined. Try not to eat the entire bowl of lemon mousse before filling the cake...it will take an immense amount of willpower...good luck.

Making the Lemon Swiss Buttercream:

3 sticks	unsalted butter, room temperature
5	egg whites (pasteurized)
1 cup	granulated sugar
2 tsp	vanilla extract
2 Tbsp	freshly squeezed/strained lemon juice

Combine the egg whites and sugar together in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer. Set mixing bowl over a pot of simmering water making sure that the water doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl. Whisk mixture until sugar dissolves and a candy thermometer reads 160 degrees F. Sources say that 160 degrees is a recommended temperature for egg safety. Even so, I still like to use pasteurized eggs in buttercream just to be safe. Once the egg mixture reaches temperature, remove the bowl from the heat and attach to the stand mixer and mix on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form and the bowl is cool to the touch. Add the butter a little at a time (about 8-10 additions) and then add in the vanilla and lemon juice. The buttercream will be beautifully smooth and shiny.

Assembling the Cake:

Place one of the cake layers on a cake plate. Spread half (or as much as desired) of the lemon mousse onto the cake. Place the second cake layer on top of the mousse and repeat with the third cake. Frost the entire cake with the Swiss Buttercream. Store the cake in an airtight container in the refrigerator and enjoy for up to a week. Before serving, remove the cake from the refrigerator and let sit at room temperature for about 30-45 minutes. You'll want the buttercream to soften to room temperature.

This cake is quite a labor of love and definitely a special occasion cake as it has many steps. Fortunately you can make it over several days before assembling...AND...what better way to express your love to someone close to your heart?? Enjoy!