

Classic Lemon Layer Cake with Tangy Cream Cheese Frosting

Prepare to brighten any day with this truly delightful



OVEN
350°F

TIME
3-4 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened (1 stick)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons lemon zest (from about 2-3 large lemons)
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 1-2 large lemons)
- 1/2 cup buttermilk, room temperature
- 1/2 cup sour cream, room temperature (full-fat for best results)
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened (full-fat brick cream cheese recommended)
- 1 cup powdered sugar (confectioners' sugar)
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Lemon slices for garnish

Swaps and Notes:

Flour: All-purpose flour is standard. Spoon and level for accurate measurement.

Butter: Unsalted butter is preferred to control salt content. Ensure it's truly softened to room temperature for proper creaming.

Sugar: Granulated sugar for the cake, powdered sugar for the frosting. Sifting powdered sugar is recommended for a smooth frosting.

Eggs, Buttermilk, Sour Cream: All should be at room temperature for proper emulsification and a tender cake crumb. Full-fat sour cream and buttermilk yield the best moisture and richness.

Lemon Zest & Juice: Fresh lemons are absolutely crucial for this cake! Avoid bottled lemon juice.

The zest provides intense lemon oil flavor, while the juice adds tartness. For more lemony goodness, check out my Coconut Lemon Pound Cake.

Cream Cheese (Frosting): Full-fat brick cream cheese, softened to room temperature, is essential for a stable and creamy frosting.

Garnish: Thin lemon slices and extra zest add a beautiful, fresh touch.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Baking this bright and zesty :** Lemon Cake involves preparing the layers and a luscious frosting.
2. **Preheat : Oven & Prep Pans:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour two 8-inch round cake pans generously. You can also line the bottoms with parchment paper for easier removal.
3. **Combine : Dry Ingredients:** In a medium bowl, whisk together the 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder, 1/4 teaspoon baking soda, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside.
4. **Cream : Butter & Sugar:** In a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream the 1/2 cup softened unsalted butter and 1 cup granulated sugar together until light and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes.
5. **Add : Eggs & Lemon Flavor:** Add the 2 large eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition until fully incorporated. Mix in the 2 tablespoons lemon zest and 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
6. **Alternate : Wet & Dry:** Gradually add the dry flour mixture to the wet ingredients, alternating with the combined 1/2 cup buttermilk and 1/2 cup sour cream. Begin and end with the dry ingredients. Mix on low speed just until combined after each addition. Be careful not to overmix the batter; overmixing can lead to a tough cake.
7. **Fill : Pans & Bake:** Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cake pans and smooth the tops with a spatula. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center of the cakes comes out clean.

8. **Cool :** Cakes: Allow the cakes to cool in the pans for 10 minutes. This helps them firm up. Then, carefully turn them out onto a wire rack to cool completely. They must be entirely cool before frosting.
9. **For the Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting:: Beat Butter & Cream Cheese:** In a large bowl, beat together the 1/2 cup softened unsalted butter and 8 oz softened cream cheese with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy, about 1-2 minutes.
10. **Add :** Powdered Sugar: Gradually add the 1 cup powdered sugar, about half a cup at a time, beating until light and fluffy.
11. **Mix in :** Lemon Flavor: Mix in the 1 tablespoon lemon zest and 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice until fully incorporated and the frosting is smooth and tangy.
12. **Assembly:: Layer & Frost:** Once the cake layers are completely cool, place one layer on a serving plate or cake stand. Spread with a thick, even layer of the Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting.
13. **Stack & : Finish:** Carefully place the second cake layer on top. Frost the top and sides of the entire cake with the remaining frosting, smoothing it with an offset spatula.
14. **Garnish:** Garnish with fresh lemon slices and an optional drizzle of extra fresh lemon juice if desired.
15. **Chill & : Serve:** For best results and easier slicing, chill the cake in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to allow the frosting to set slightly. Slice and serve chilled or at room temperature.

SWAPS & NOTES

Flour: All-purpose flour is standard.

Spoon and level for accurate measurement.

Butter: Unsalted butter is preferred to control salt content.

Ensure it's truly softened to room temperature for proper creaming.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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