



### **Lemon Layer Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting**

*Adapted from Bon Appetit (cake and frosting) and Gourmet (lemon curd)*

This is a make-in-advance kind of cake, because there is a lot of chilling time built in. I recommend making the frosting and lemon curd two days before serving. Make the cake the day before serving.

#### Lemon Cake Layers:

6 large eggs, separated  
14 tablespoons sugar  
1 3/4 cups sifted cake flour (sifted, then measured)  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup boiling water  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 375°F. Line bottom of two 9-inch-diameter cake pans with 1 1/2-inch-high sides with parchment paper (do not grease pans or parchment). Using electric mixer, beat egg yolks and 7 tablespoons sugar in large bowl until mixture is very thick and slowly dissolving ribbons form when beaters are lifted, about 4 minutes. Using clean dry beaters, beat whites in another large bowl until soft peaks form. Add remaining 7 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff and glossy. Fold half of whites into yolk mixture, then sift half of flour and 1/4 teaspoon salt over and gently fold in until incorporated. Fold in remaining whites, then sift remaining flour and scraped vanilla beans over and fold in just until combined, being careful not to deflate batter.

Divide batter between pans; smooth tops. Bake until tester inserted into center of cakes comes out clean, about 15 minutes. Cool in pans on racks.

Run knife around edge of pans to loosen cakes. Invert cakes onto 9-inch-diameter cardboard rounds, tapping on work surface if necessary to release cakes. Cut each cake horizontally in half (layers will be thin). Peel off parchment.

Place sugar in small metal bowl. Add 1/2 cup boiling water; stir to dissolve sugar. Stir in lemon juice. Brush cake layers with syrup. (Note, use all the syrup.)

#### Lemon Curd:

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh lemon zest  
1 cup fresh lemon juice  
1 1/3 cups sugar  
4 large eggs  
1 3/4 sticks (3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon pieces

Whisk together zest, lemon juice, sugar, eggs, and a pinch of salt in a 2-quart heavy saucepan. Add butter all at once and cook over moderately low heat, whisking constantly, until curd is thick enough to hold marks of whisk and first bubbles appear on surface, about 10 minutes. Immediately pour curd through a fine sieve into a bowl, then chill for at least four hours (and preferably overnight), covered. [Can be made 2 days in advance.]

#### Cream Cheese Frosting:

2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, room temperature  
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature  
4 cups powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Using electric mixer, beat cream cheese and butter in large bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar. Beat in lemon peel and vanilla. Chill until ready to use. [Can be made up to 2 days in advance.]

#### Assembly:

Place one of the four cake layers on cake stand, lined with strips of parchment or wax paper. Slather the surface of the layer with one-third of the lemon curd, spreading evenly. Repeat with the remaining cake layers.

Spread frosting over the top and down the sides of the cake, using an offset spatula to smooth the frosting. Chill at least four hours before serving (preferably overnight). [Can be made up to 1 day before serving.]

