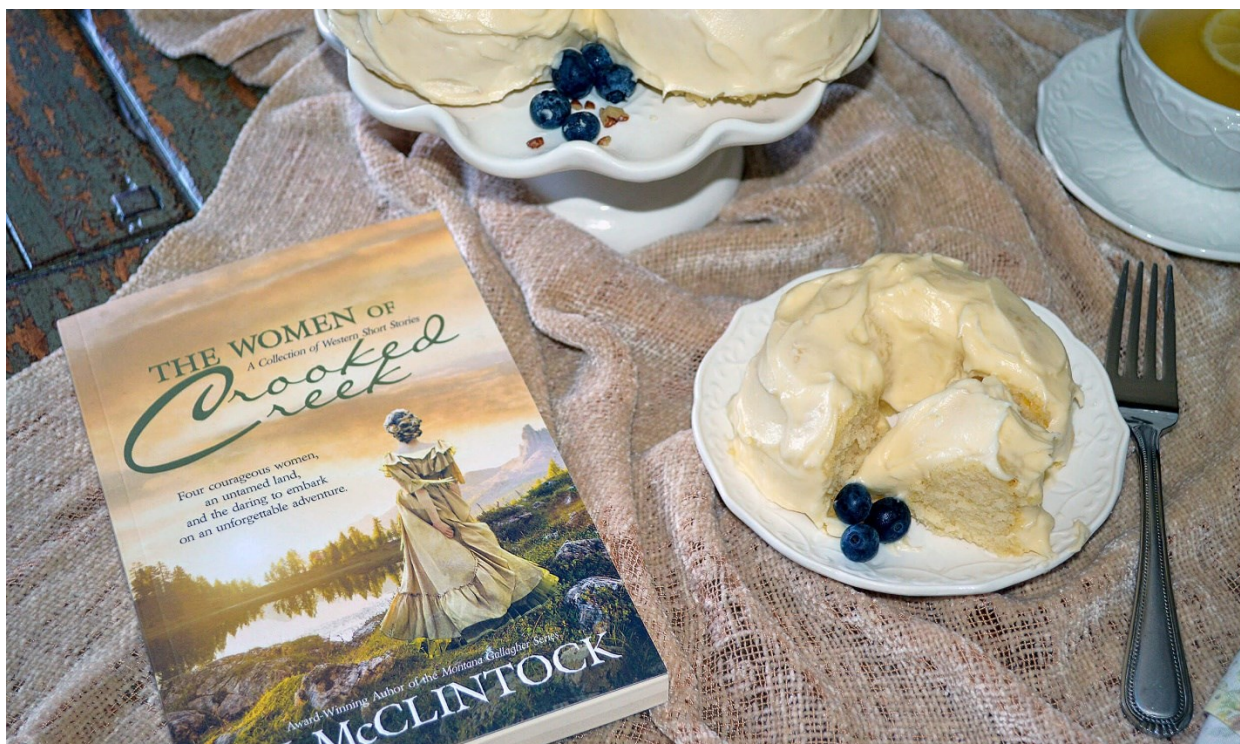


LEMON CAKE WITH LEMON CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

A Writer in the Kitchen with MK McClintock

This is a rich, zesty, and fluffy lemon cake. The original recipe is for a layer cake, but I made cakelettes instead. They were messy to frost, and a reminder that one should keep one's kitchen skills honed. It's a modification of a recipe from wellplated.com. This recipe will seem complicated at first glance, but it's really quite easy. Be sure to read it through to make sure you have all the ingredients and mixing/baking supplies on hand.



Servings: 12 muffins* (see notes at the end on servings)

Total Approx. Prep and Cook Time:

30 minutes prep; 35 baking time; 40 minutes set time

Ingredients for the Lemon Cake

- 2 ¼ cups cake flour or pastry flour*
- 1 Tbs baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- ½ cup non-fat milk
- 3 large eggs, plus 1 egg white
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Zest from 2 large lemons
- ½ - 1 Tbs lemon extract*
- 1 stick (8 Tbs) unsalted butter, at room temperature

Ingredients for the Frosting

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 stick (8 Tbs) unsalted butter, softened (not melted)
- 3 cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 Tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 Tbs lemon extract
- 1 Tbs freshly grated lemon zest
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp sea salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Prepare the cake pan(s). If using cakelette pans or a Bundt pan, spray with a baking spray. If using layer cake, spray two 8x2-inch round cake pans. If you choose, you can line each layer with parchment cut to fit and spray again.
3. In a medium bowl, sift or whisk together the cake or pastry flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
4. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, milk, egg whites, and egg until combined.
5. In the bowl of a standing mixer or large mixing bowl, combine the sugar and lemon zest and rub together for a minute. You can also use a food processor. I prefer a stand mixer because it's easy to move right into the next step.
6. Add the butter to the sugar mixture and beat on medium speed for 3 minutes. Set a timer so you don't go under. The mixture should be light and fluffy. Beat in the lemon juice and lemon extract.
7. While beating on low-medium speed, add one-third of the flour mixture, then half of the buttermilk mixture until combined. Add another one-third of the flour mixture, then the remaining buttermilk mixture until combined. Add the remaining flour mixture and beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Make sure to scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl after, and beat another 30 seconds.
8. For the pans:
 - a. If using cakelette pans, divide the batter evenly among the wells. I like using a ladle for this part.
 - b. If using a Bundt pan, slowly pour the batter until it's all in the pan.
 - c. If using cake rounds, divide the batter evenly among the two rounds. It helps to weigh each round with the batter to make sure they are even.
9. Baking:

- a. For cake rounds, bake 30-35 minutes, or until the cakes are well risen, spring back lightly when touched, and a small knife or wooden stir stick inserted comes out clean.
 - b. For Bundt cake, bake 35-40 minutes. If your oven runs hot, check after 35 minutes.
 - c. For cakelettes, bake 20-30 minutes. The time will depend on how much you filled each cake well, so check after 20 minutes. I used two six-well cakelette pans and baked them for 23 minutes. Insert a small knife or wooden stir stick in one of the cakes and make sure it comes out clean.
10. Once done, cool on wire racks in the pans for 5-10 minutes before removing. Allow to continue cooling on the wire racks for 30-40 minutes, or until at room temperature.
 11. While the cake is cooking, prepare the frosting. I like to use a hand mixer for small batches of frosting because it gives me more control over scraping the sides and bottom of the bowl, but a stand mixer also works.
 12. Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, or a medium mixing bowl with a hand mixer, beat the cream cheese and butter together on medium speed until smooth and lump free; about 3 minutes. Reduce the mixer to low speed, then add the powdered sugar, 1 Tbs lemon juice, 1 Tbs lemon extract, lemon zest, vanilla extract, and sea salt. Once the sugar begins to incorporate, increase the mixer speed to high and beat for 3 minutes. Add the remaining 1 Tbs lemon juice if a thinner frosting is desired. If you want a thicker frosting, add 1 Tbs of powdered sugar at a time until desired consistency is reached.
 13. Once the cake has cooled to room temperature it can be frosted.
 - a. If making layer cakes, you may opt to trim the tops of the cake layers to create a flat surface. If I'm baking just for family, I don't bother with this step. Place the first layer on the food-safe plate or cake stand of your choice. Frost the top evenly, then place the second layer on top. Frost the top of the second layer and the sides of both rounds. Decorate as desired.
 - b. If making Bundt cake or cakelettes, frost until the cake is covered.
 14. Allow to set for 15 minutes before slicing.

Serving Suggestions

- Fresh berries go great with this cake, especially raspberries, blueberries, or blackberries.
- Make a berry puree using one more or more. Smash the berries together in a bowl or mix in a food processor, and serve over or on the side of the cake.

***Notes**

- Servings: 12-18 for layer or Bundt cake, or whatever you choose. Serving size is relative as you may prefer a thin slice or thick slice. This is a rich cake, so a thin slice is quite satisfying. If making cakelettes, try just half of one first and save or share the other half.
- The original recipe calls for cake flour, which you can use. I like Bob's Red Mill Pastry Flour. It has a nice, fine consistency and produces a light finished product.
- The original recipe calls for reduced-fat sour cream, which I do not usually keep on hand, so I used regular organic sour cream.
- The extra lemon extract in the cake recipe is optional. I added it because I like extra zing.
- The cake freezes well in a glass or plastic freezer-safe container. Thaw it in the refrigerator overnight and then allow it to come to room temperature before serving. Do not microwave or you risk making a runny mess of your frosting.