

How to make LEMON CURD and other kinds

Contributed by gil

Autumn : season of mists and mellow etc., harvesting, and comfort food…Actually, you can make lemon curd all year round, or whenever various citrus fruits are cheapest and / or in season. And you'll never touch that fluorescent yellow G**** stuff again.

Not a food that strikes one as particularly downsizery, since the fruit's not indigenous (though as global warming takes hold, you lucky folk down south might be able to grow lemons), although it does involve eggs, so if you've got a glut of these…. Anyway, it's something else you might want to know how to make for yourself.

Equipment for making lemon curd

The smallest holes on the all-purpose grater / lemon zester / nutmeg grater

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A china pudding basin

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A saucepan into which the bowl fits without touching the bottom of the pan

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Tea strainer or sieve for lemon juice

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Wooden spoon

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Spatula (for scraping bowl)

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Small (4-6oz) glass jars with lids

LEMON CURD 1

Made many times, with experimental variations. This recipe works well. It has won prizes over the years at agricultural shows, in the face of competition from recipes with different proportions of ingredients. And it tastes very good.

Lemon Curd Ingredients

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8oz caster sugar (granulated won't do, turns out gritty)

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4oz unsalted butter (salted makes it taste wrong, to my mind)

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2-3 medium lemons (fresh, with good, zesty rind, preferably unwaxed; waxed is OK, but scrub first)

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2 medium hen eggs, + 1 hen egg yolk or 1 bantam egg (yolk and white)

Method

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Put the jars into a low oven to warm

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Fill the pan with water so that when you rest the basin on it (like a double boiler for porridge), the water comes about 2 – 3" up the basin sides.

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Put sugar and butter into the basin, and allow to heat gently (electric ring 2-ish) till the sugar dissolves and the butter melts.

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Meanwhile, grate the rind of 3 lemons.

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Add the lemon rind and the juice of 2 lemons (strained) to butter and sugar. Turn the ring down slightly.

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Beat the eggs and strain into the mix.

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Heat slowly, stirring the whole time with a wooden spoon, in the same direction (clockwise or anticlockwise, doesn't matter, but keep stirring that way [old cooks' lore, may be complete tosh]), until the mix is the consistency of thick but runny custard when you're just about to pour it out of the pan and into the jug. Or until it coats the back of a wooden spoon.

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Pot into small, warmed jars and fit lids immediately, or wait till cold.

Yield : 3 small jars. And yes, it is worth it. Occasionally.

Storage : Keeps for up to 6 weeks, in the fridge.

Notes :

- a. The water in the pan underneath should never boil.
- b. The mix should never boil or even simmer.
- c. To get the most juice out of a lemon, roll it around on the worktop first under pressure from your hand till it feels squidgier than before. Before you zest it (!).
- d. Do not zest your lemons too enthusiastically. The white pith makes the finished product taste unpleasant.
- e. If the mix curdles when you add the egg, don't worry. Most of this will resolve as cooking proceeds, and can be stirred in towards the end. Any white bits can be removed then.
- f. Stage 7 can take about 50-60 mins, depending on how cautious you are being, and how low the heat is. You could try slightly more heat, taking less time.
- g. Do not overcook (on the other hand). You could grout tiling with the result.
- h. Resist adding even more lemon zest for a more lemony taste. It just tastes odd, and the texture is too gritty. And more juice will make the mix even runnier.
- i. Use an oven glove or tea towel when lifting the basin off the pan to pot the curd. The water underneath produces scalding steam.

ORANGE CURD

As for lemon curd above, but use zest and juice of just 2 oranges.

LIME CURD

As for lemon curd above, but use zest of 3-4, and juice of 3 limes.

LEMON CURD 2

Never made this version, but it is proportionately cheaper and the yield is higher.

Equipment, method, storage and notes as above.

Ingredients :

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Grated rind and juice of 4 lemons

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4 eggs, beaten

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4oz butter (unsalted)

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1lb sugar (caster)

Yield : about 1.5 lbs (apparently)

GOOSEBERRY CURD APRICOT CURD

You can also make these, but I've never tried.

Gbst has also written the following articles on preserves for Downsizer.net:

Preserving wild fruits

Basic jam recipes

An introduction to jams and jellies

To discuss this article or ask questions visit the Downsizer.net recipes, preserving and homebrewing forum

With thanks to Sean for providing photos of the process.