

SUNNY DELIGHTS

Radiant **ORANGES**, vibrant **GRAPEFRUITS**, luminous **LEMONS** and **LIMES**—in the South, sunshine grows on trees right in our own backyards. It's the height of citrus season now, and we squeezed these sweet-tart fruits into delicious desserts that are a refreshing remedy for the midwinter blues

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DREAMY LEMON CHEESECAKE

RECIPE, PAGE 95

A water bath cooks the cheesecake gently, making it extra creamy with a smooth, crack-free top. You can make the lemon curd up to two weeks in advance; just be sure to store it in the refrigerator.

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GRAPEFRUIT TART

RECIPE, PAGE 97

This tart's crunchy, slightly salty crust (made with saltine crackers) pairs beautifully with the tangy grapefruit filling and sweet whipped cream.



MEYER LEMON SPONGE PUDDING

RECIPE, PAGE 97

If regular lemons are a brass band tune, Meyer lemons are a jazz ballad. They have a softer, more complex flavor and smooth, golden rinds. If you can't find Meyer lemons, use regular lemon juice and zest for a more pronounced flavor in these tender sponge puddings.



MIXED CITRUS BARS

RECIPE, PAGE 96

Why should lemons have all the fun? These classic cookie bars show off a rainbow of citrus flavors, from temptingly tart lemon and lime to delicately bright grapefruit and orange.



LEMON-VANILLA POUND CAKE WITH LAVENDER GLAZE

RECIPE, PAGE 96

Although you can make the glaze for this delicious pound cake without lavender, it adds a soft floral note that balances the tartness of the lemon. Look for dried lavender buds at specialty food markets like Fresh Market or Whole Foods.



CLEMENTINE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

RECIPE, PAGE 95

This time of year, wooden crates of clementines line the produce department. Here's another way to eat those juicy little oranges other than out of hand: Slice them as thinly as you can with a very sharp knife or mandoline. Once the rinds bake on the cake, they'll be soft enough to eat.



CLEMENTINE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

- 1/2 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 cup salted butter, softened, divided
- 4 clementines or mandarin oranges, thinly sliced (about 1/4 inch)
- 1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. orange zest
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup plain white cornmeal
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 2/3 cup buttermilk
- 3 large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease the inside of a 9-inch springform pan. Snugly line pan with a 12-inch circle of heavy-duty aluminum foil, pressing any pleats flat.
2. Bring brown sugar, honey, and 1/4 cup of the butter to a boil in a small saucepan over medium, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, and spread evenly in prepared pan.
3. Remove seeds from orange slices. Arrange in a single layer over sugar mixture.
4. Beat remaining 3/4 cup softened butter with a heavy-duty stand mixer at medium speed until creamy; gradually add granulated sugar, and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Stir in zest and vanilla. Whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a small bowl. Whisk together buttermilk and eggs in another small bowl. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat just until blended after each addition. Spread batter evenly over oranges.
5. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 1 hour, 10 minutes to 1 hour, 15 minutes, covering with foil after 1 hour if cake has browned on top but not cooked through completely. Cool in pan on a wire rack 15 minutes.
6. Transfer springform pan to a rimmed baking sheet (to catch any drips). Remove sides of pan and invert cake onto a serving platter. Cool 1 hour before serving.

SERVES 10 **ACTIVE** 30 min. **TOTAL** 2 hours, 55 min.

DREAMY LEMON CHEESECAKE

- 2 1/2 cups crushed cream-filled lemon sandwich cookies (such as Lemon Oreo Sandwich Cookies) (about 25 cookies)
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. salted butter, melted
- 5 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 Tbsp. lemon zest plus 5 Tbsp. fresh juice (about 2 lemons)
- 2 Tbsp. heavy cream
- Yellow food coloring gel paste (such as Spectrum Lemon Yellow Soft Gel Paste Food Coloring)
- 1 cup Lemon Curd (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Wrap outside of a lightly greased 9-inch shiny springform pan in a double layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Stir together crushed cookies and melted butter in a bowl. Press onto bottom of prepared pan.
2. Bake in preheated oven until lightly browned, 7 to 8 minutes. Cool on a wire rack until ready to use. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.
3. Beat cream cheese with a heavy-duty mixer on medium speed until creamy, about 5 minutes. Gradually add sugar and flour, beating until smooth. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until yellow disappears after each addition. Add egg yolks, 1 at a time, beating just until yellow disappears after each addition. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, and heavy cream.
4. Remove 3 cups of batter, and place in a medium bowl. Using a wooden pick, add a small amount of food coloring gel paste to the 3 cups of batter. Stir until batter is pale yellow, adding more gel paste if necessary.
5. Dollop half of untinted batter into prepared crust. Dollop half of pale yellow tinted batter on top of untinted batter dollops. Swirl together using a small knife, creating a marbled look. Repeat procedure with remaining halves of untinted and pale yellow tinted batters. Place springform pan in

a roasting pan. Add boiling water to reach halfway up sides of springform pan.

6. Bake at 325°F until center is almost set but still slightly wobbly, 1 hour and 10 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Turn off oven, and let cheesecake stand in oven, with door partially open, 1 hour.
7. Remove cheesecake from roasting pan and water bath, and place on wire rack. Cool completely, about 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap, using wooden picks to prevent plastic wrap from touching top of cheesecake. Chill 8 to 24 hours.
8. Gently run a knife around outer edge of cheesecake to loosen from sides of pan. Remove sides of pan. Spread top with 1 cup Lemon Curd.

SERVES 12 (serving size: 1 slice) **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 10 hours, 40 min.

Lemon Curd

- 1/2 cup salted butter, softened
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 Tbsp. lemon zest, plus 1 cup fresh juice (about 4 large lemons)

1. Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until blended, about 45 seconds. Add eggs and egg yolks, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition. Gradually add lemon juice to butter mixture, beating at low speed just until blended. Stir in zest. (Mixture will look curdled.)
2. Transfer mixture to a heavy 4-quart saucepan, and cook, whisking constantly, over medium-low until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, 14 to 16 minutes.
3. Transfer curd to a bowl, and place plastic wrap directly on warm curd (to prevent a film from forming). Chill until firm, about 4 hours. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

SERVES 8 (serving size: about 1/2 cup) **ACTIVE** 25 min. **TOTAL** 4 hours, 25 min.

The Best Way To Zest

Fresh citrus zest, or finely grated rind, adds a vibrant layer of flavor to sweet and savory recipes. If you've ever added lemon zest to cookies or lime zest to tacos, you know what we're saying. The best tool to unlock all that zing is a rasp grater (such as a Microplane), but how you use it can make all the difference. Instead of holding the citrus over the grater and letting the ribbons fall, try grating with the U-shape of the tool facing up—this will not only keep the shreds collected but also make it easier to avoid grating the bitter white pith.

MIXED CITRUS BARS

- 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar, plus additional for garnish
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. lemon zest, divided
- 1 cup cold salted butter, cut into small cubes
- 6 large eggs
- 2 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line bottom and sides of a 13- x 9-inch pan with heavy-duty aluminum foil, allowing 2 to 3 inches to extend over sides; lightly grease foil with cooking spray.

2. Pulse almonds, 2 cups of the flour, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, and 1 teaspoon of the lemon zest in a food processor until almonds are finely chopped and mixture is combined, about 5 pulses. Add butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly, about 10 pulses. Press mixture evenly onto bottom of prepared pan.

3. Bake in preheated oven until lightly browned, 18 to 22 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, whisk eggs in a large bowl until smooth; whisk in granulated sugar, lemon juice, and remaining 1 tablespoon lemon zest. Stir together baking powder, salt, and the remaining 1/3 cup flour in a small bowl; whisk into egg mixture. Pour mixture over hot baked crust. Return to oven, and bake until filling is set, 24 to 26 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack 30 minutes.

5. Remove from pan, using foil sides as handles. Cool completely on a wire rack, about 30 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish. Remove foil; cut into bars, and garnish with powdered sugar.

MAKES about 2 dozen bars. **ACTIVE** 15 min. **TOTAL** 1 hour, 25 min.

Lime Bars

Prepare recipe as directed, substituting **lime zest** for lemon zest and fresh **lime juice** for lemon juice. Using a small wooden pick, stir a small amount of **mint green food coloring gel** into filling mixture before pouring into crust in Step 4. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Orange Bars

Prepare recipe as directed, substituting **orange zest** for lemon zest and 1/2 cup fresh

orange juice and 1/4 cup fresh **lemon juice** for the 3/4 cup lemon juice. Using a small wooden pick, stir a small amount of **red food coloring gel** into filling mixture before pouring into crust in Step 4. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Grapefruit Bars

Prepare recipe as directed, substituting **grapefruit zest** for lemon zest in the crust and 1/2 cup fresh **grapefruit juice** and 1/4 cup fresh **lemon juice** for the 3/4 cup lemon juice. Using a small wooden pick, stir a small amount of deep **pink food coloring gel** into filling mixture before pouring into crust in Step 4. Proceed with recipe as directed.

MAKES about 2 dozen bars

LEMON-VANILLA POUND CAKE WITH LAVENDER GLAZE

- 1 cup salted butter, softened
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 2 Tbsp. lemon zest, plus additional for garnish
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 (8-oz.) container sour cream
- Vegetable shortening
- Lavender Glaze (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Beat butter with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer at medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition. Stir in lemon zest, fresh lemon juice, and vanilla bean paste.

2. Stir together flour, salt, and baking soda in a medium bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat at low speed just until blended after each addition. Pour batter into a greased (with shortening) and floured 10-inch tube pan.

3. Bake in preheated oven until a long wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 1 hour, 15 minutes to 1 hour, 30 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes; remove

cake from pan to wire rack, and cool completely, about 2 hours.

4. Spoon Lavender Glaze over cake. Sprinkle with lemon zest.

SERVES 16 **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 3 hours, 45 min.

Lavender Glaze

- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1 Tbsp. dried lavender buds
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 to 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice, divided

Bring 1/2 cup milk just to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium. Remove from heat, and stir in 1 Tbsp. dried lavender; let stand 10 minutes. Pour lavender milk through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a bowl, and cool completely, about 20 minutes. Whisk together powdered sugar, salt, 2 Tbsp. lavender milk, and 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice. Whisk in up to 2 teaspoons lemon juice, 1 teaspoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached.

MAKES about 1 cup **ACTIVE** 5 min. **TOTAL** 35 min.

MEYER LEMON SPONGE PUDDING

- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 2 Tbsp. salted butter
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 Tbsp. finely grated Meyer lemon zest
- 1/3 cup fresh Meyer lemon juice
- Pinch of salt

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine milk and butter in a small saucepan, and cook over medium-low, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and small bubbles appear around edge of milk, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat.

2. Whisk together egg yolks in a large bowl until thick and pale; gradually whisk in about one-fourth hot milk mixture. Add remaining hot milk mixture to yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Stir together flour and 3/4 cup of the sugar in a small bowl. Whisk sugar mixture into yolk mixture. Whisk in lemon zest and juice.

3. Beat egg whites and salt with an electric mixer at medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. With mixer running, gradually

Southern Citrus

While the West may be known as America's salad bowl, the South is America's fruit basket, and we're not talking about our high concentration of colorful storytellers. Florida alone accounts for over half of the country's citrus, with Texas being the third biggest producer. Just like tomatoes in the summer, between December and April, the South grows dozens of different varieties from flamingo pink-fleshed grapefruits to golden lemons and coral-colored oranges. Pick up these drops of sunshine at the grocery store or the farmers' market any chance you get.

KEY LIMES

Tiny and tart; bake them into the popular pie.

CARA CARA ORANGES

Sweet, bright red flesh; add wedges to salads.

SATSUMAS

Honey-like taste; juice it, or enjoy as is—it's Louisiana's clementine.

RIO STAR GRAPEFRUITS

Hot pink inside; squeeze into a Paloma cocktail.

KUMQUATS

Tangy with an edible peel; slice into fruit salad.

MINNEOLA TANGELO

Slightly pear-shaped tangerine hybrid; use for marmalade.

POMELO

Like an oversize grapefruit with less acidity; mix a margarita with the juice.

add remaining 1/4 cup sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, 5 to 6 minutes. Stir one-third of egg white mixture into milk mixture until smooth. Gently fold in remaining egg white mixture until just combined.

4. Spoon pudding into 8 (6-ounce) ramekins or custard cups (about 3/4 cup pudding per ramekin). Arrange ramekins in a baking pan or roasting pan. Add enough hot tap water to reach halfway up sides of ramekins (about 6 cups water for a 9- x 13-inch pan).

5. Bake in preheated oven until puddings are very lightly browned on top, about 30 minutes. Remove ramekins from water bath to a wire rack, and cool 15 minutes. Invert puddings onto individual serving plates. Serve immediately or at room temperature.

SERVES 8 **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 1 hour, 45 min.

GRAPEFRUIT TART

- 1 1/2 cups finely crushed saltine crackers (about 1 sleeve)
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar, divided
- 7 Tbsp. salted butter, melted
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1/8 tsp. table salt
- 1 3/4 cups fresh red grapefruit juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 4 egg yolks
- Deep pink food color gel
- 1/3 cup salted butter, cut into 4 pieces
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 Tbsp. powdered sugar
- Grapefruit slices, quartered

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Stir together cracker crumbs, 1/4 cup of the granulated sugar, and melted butter in a small bowl. Press mixture into a lightly greased 9-inch fluted tart pan with removable rim, pressing evenly up sides and on bottom.

2. Bake in preheated oven until crust is lightly browned, 12 to 14 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, combine cornstarch, salt, and remaining 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar in a medium-size heavy saucepan. Whisk in juices and egg yolks. Using a small wooden pick, stir in a small amount of deep pink food coloring gel. Cook over medium, whisking constantly, until mixture comes to a boil. Boil, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Remove from heat; whisk in 1/3 cup butter pieces.

4. Pour filling into prepared tart shell. Chill uncovered 4 to 24 hours.

5. Beat cream with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until foamy; gradually add powdered sugar, beating until soft peaks form. Dollop over tart. Top with quartered grapefruit slices.

SERVES 8 **ACTIVE** 40 min. **TOTAL** 4 hours, 52 min.

Note: For a pretty garnish (shown on page 90), cut thin grapefruit half-moon slices; then make one incision from the center to the rind. Gently twist the center until it creates a helix-like shape. The slices will keep their shape once nestled into the whipped cream. 🍷

Choose your favorite flavor of citrus curd to make these vibrant bar cookies.