

CookSmart

BY THREE MANY COOKS

The best lemon bars, bar none

THE PERFECT lemon bar is equal parts soft, bold lemon filling, melt-in-your-mouth crust and easy recipe. Make a simple crust. While it bakes, make a simple filling; bake again. Cool, cut, share (and sprinkle confectioner's sugar on top if you like). Be prepared to share the recipe.

Luscious Lemon Bars

For crust:

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/8 tsp. salt

1/2 cup confectioner's sugar

1 stick (8 Tbs.) butter, melted but not hot

For filling:

2 large eggs

3/4 cup sugar

1 1/2 Tbs. all-purpose flour

6 Tbs. juice from 2 lemons

2 tsps. finely grated lemon zest

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Spray an 8- by 8-inch baking pan with vegetable cooking spray. Fit an 8-inch by 16-inch piece of heavy-duty foil across pan bottom and up the 2 sides as foil overhangs to pull bars from the pan. Spray foil with vegetable cooking spray.

Mix flour, salt, confectioner's sugar in a medium bowl; stir in butter to form dough. Press dough into pan bottom (the bottom of a measuring cup dipped in flour helps). Bake until pale golden, about 20 minutes.

While pastry bakes, whisk eggs, sugar, flour, lemon juice and zest in a medium bowl.

Remove pan from oven. Add lemon mixture and continue to bake until just set, about 20 minutes longer; let cool in pan for a few minutes and then using foil handles, pull bars from pan and set on a wire rack. Cool until room temperature. Cut into squares and serve.

YIELD: 16 small bars

Per serving: 143 calories, 20g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 6g fat (4g saturated fat), 39mg cholesterol, 0g dietary fiber, 78mg sodium



Maggy:

I'm known as the chocaholic in our fam but I must admit I've a soft spot for lemon bars. Bold lemon and buttery crust? Say no more! Pass the bars and a cup of Earl Grey.



Pam:

Teatime is almost a ritual for me. One of these lemon bars is the perfect accompaniment though I'll admit eating just one is a real challenge!