

Lemon Curd

Lemon curd is traditionally one of the condiments served at tea with scones, finger sandwiches and little cakes but it is also great as a filling for sandwich cookies or layer cakes, as a filling for cream puffs (lemon is good with the classic chocolate topping), used on lemon bars, filled into tartlets topped with meringue or whipped cream and as a garnish for gingerbread or angel food cake. I even like it with ice cream. The recipe below uses a little cornstarch which insures a nice thick curd which will stand up to all of these uses, especially sandwich cookies and lemon bars. It yields about 1½ cups and is enough to amply fill about 6 dozen 1½ to 2" sandwich cookies.

3/4 c. fresh, strained lemon juice (4-5 lemons) and the zest from 2 (more to taste)

2 Tbl. cornstarch

3/4 c. granulated sugar

1/2 c. unsalted butter (8 Tbl. or 1 stick), cut into pieces and soft if possible as it melts faster

1/2 tsp. sea salt

4 lg. egg yolks, room temperature

In a medium, heavy bottomed sauce pot, whisk together the juice and cornstarch until the starch is dissolved. Add sugar, butter and salt and place over medium high heat. Whisk frequently at first and constantly as the mixture thickens. Beat the egg yolks in a small bowl to combine. Very gradually add about half of the lemon mixture to the eggs, whisking constantly. Then pour eggs back into sauce pot with remaining lemon mixture along with the zest. Simmer, whisking constantly for about 3 minutes or until mixture falls into ribbons as it is lifted from the pot with the whisk. Pour into a clean bowl and cover with plastic wrap, being sure the plastic touches the entire surface of the lemon curd (this prevents a "skin" from forming). Chill until ready to use. Kept covered and refrigerated, the curd will last about a week.