

Lemon Poppy Seed Bars

By Melissa Clark

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Linda Xiao for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini

Total Time	1 hour, plus at least 1½ hours' cooling time
Prep Time	15 minutes
Cook Time	45 minutes, plus at least 1½ hours' cooling time
Rating	★★★★★ (50)

These curd-filled treats split the difference between lemon bars and lemon poppy seed cake, with a shortbread-like crust and crumbly streusel topping studded with poppy seeds. If you don't feel like making homemade lemon curd, store-bought works perfectly, or substitute thick fruit jam or marmalade.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 16 squares

1 cup/228 grams unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pan

⅔ cup/130 grams granulated sugar

¾ teaspoon fine sea salt

Finely grated zest of 2 lemons

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-inch square metal baking pan and line the bottom sides with parchment, leaving 1 inch of overhang all around.

Step 2

Add sugar and salt to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add lemon zest and mix with the paddle attachment until the sugar is moist and fragrant, about 1 minute.

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract (or
¼ teaspoon almond extract)
2¼ cups/270 grams all-purpose
flour
2 tablespoons poppy seeds
1 cup/240 grams lemon curd,
homemade or store-bought

Step 3

Add the butter and beat on medium speed until smooth, 1 to 3 minutes. Beat in the extract.

Step 4

Turn off the mixer, add flour, then mix on low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Add poppy seeds and continue to mix on low until incorporated but still crumbly, about 1 minute (do not overmix the dough).

Step 5

Transfer 1 cup of the crumbled dough to a small bowl. Transfer the remaining dough to the prepared pan and flatten into an even layer using the flat bottom of a glass or your hands. Spread the curd in an even layer over the surface of the crust and sprinkle with reserved dough, crumbling into pieces as you sprinkle.

Step 6

Bake, rotating after 20 minutes, until the crumb topping is golden brown and the curd bubbles at the edges, 40 to 48 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely in the pan, at least 1½ hours.

Step 7

Use the parchment to lift the bars out of the pan onto a cutting board. Trim parchment off the edges and cut into 16 squares.

Private Notes

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