

Lemon cupcakes

MAKES 12

Hollowing out a bit of the sponge and putting in a small spoonful of lemon curd makes this cupcake very moist and tangy. Lemon is always a popular alternative to chocolate or vanilla desserts. The trick is to keep the frosting slightly tart, to temper the sugar.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 half teaspoons baking powder
- 150g caster sugar
- 120g plain flour
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest, plus extra to decorate
- 40g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 120ml whole milk
- 1 egg
- lemon frosting
- 250g icing sugar, sifted
- 80g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
- a couple of drops of yellow food colouring (optional)
- 25ml whole milk
- a 12-hole cupcake tray, lined with paper cases

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 170C (325F) Gas 3.

Put the flour, sugar, baking powder, lemon zest and butter in a freestanding electric mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) and beat on slow speed until you get a sandy consistency and everything is combined. Gradually pour in the milk and beat until just incorporated.

Add the egg to the flour mixture and continue beating until just incorporated (scrape any unmixed ingredients from the side of the bowl with a rubber spatula). Continue mixing for a couple more minutes until the mixture is smooth. Do not overmix.

Spoon the mixture into the paper cases until two-thirds full and bake in the preheated oven for 20—25 minutes, or until the sponge bounces back when touched. A skewer inserted in the centre should come out clean. Leave the cupcakes to cool slightly in the tray before turning out onto a wire cooling rack to cool completely.

For the lemon frosting: Beat together the icing sugar, butter, lemon zest and food colouring, if using, in a freestanding electric mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) on medium-slow speed until the mixture comes together and is well mixed. Turn the mixer down to a slower speed. Slowly pour in the milk, then when it is all incorporated, turn the mixer up to high speed. Continue beating until the frosting is light and fluffy, at least 5 minutes.

The longer the frosting is beaten, the fluffier and lighter it becomes.

When the cupcakes are cold, spoon the lemon frosting on top and decorate with a little lemon zest.