

CHEWY LEMON BARS WITH LEMON CHANTILLY

For the Shortbread Crust:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
3/4 cup unsalted butter, cubed

For the Filling:

8 eggs
zest and juice of 4 large lemons
2 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

For the Lemon Chantilly (Whipped Cream):

1 1/3 cups/7.5 oz lemon rinds (both the yellow skin and bitter white pith)
1/2 cup/3.5 oz sugar
1 cup/8 oz heavy whipping cream, cold
2 tablespoons freshly grated lemon zest, optional

powdered sugar, for dusting
edible organic flowers

Make the crust. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Whisk together your flour, granulated sugar and salt, then cube your butter and use your hands to cut it into the flour mixture until coarse crumbs form. Line a 9x13-inch pan with parchment and press your shortbread dough into the pan as evenly as you can, but don't worry about going up the sides of the pan. Bake for 15 minutes or so, until the edges start to turn slightly golden. Remove from the oven and set aside.

Make the filling. While your crust bakes, whisk together your eggs, lemon juice and lemon zest, sugar, flour and salt. Pour the mixture over the hot crust once it's ready, and bake for 25-30 minutes, until fully set but not browned. Allow the bars to cool completely before slicing (I refrigerated mine).

Make the lemon syrup. Cut each lemon (3 medium lemons or 6 Meyer lemons) into a few chunks and toss with sugar in a large glass, ceramic, or stainless steel mixing bowl. Cover tightly and let stand at room temperature, stirring once every 45 minutes or so, until sugar has completely dissolved, about 3 hours (or up to 12 if timing is an issue).

Using a cheesecloth-lined or fine-mesh stainless steel strainer set over a nonreactive bowl, strain syrup. Working in batches, transfer rinds to a stainless steel potato ricer and squeeze to release any extra syrup, allowing it to pass through strainer into bowl; discard rinds. Refrigerate until ready to use; you should end up with about half a cup of syrup.

Make the lemon whipped cream. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, combine cream, all of the previously prepared lemon syrup, and zest (if using). Whip at medium-high speed until fluffy and thick, about 5 minutes. Use immediately. Makes about 2 cups.

Assemble dessert. When ready to serve, sprinkle with powdered sugar and decorate with edible flowers. Once cut and plated, top with a dollop of Lemon Chantilly Cream.