

# #12 Tangy Lemon Bars



These delicious and VERY lemony squares are basically crunchy shortbread crust with a butter-free lemon curd filling. The melt-in-the-mouth lemon curd is wonderfully gooey as opposed to thick and rubbery as with so many other recipes. To achieve this perfectly gooey consistency, timing is of crucial importance. Mix the filling just before the cake goes into the oven and don't bake it for longer than 25 minutes.

## METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C fan/gas mark 4. Grease the baking tin with a little butter and line it with two baking paper sheets remembering to apply the butter between them. Leave 1 cm extra on the edges so that you are able to lift the cake out of the tin easily.
2. Prepare the shortbread dough – place the **flour** and **icing sugar** in a medium bowl and mix well. Add the **butter** followed by the **vanilla extract**. Using your finger tips rub the butter into the dry ingredients until it's just combined, resembles breadcrumbs and clumps together when squeezed.
3. Tip the loose dough into the baking tin and with your hands squash it down flat to create a **crust**. To prevent the lemon filling from leaking underneath the crust you need to bring the dough up the sides of the tin to create **an edge** which will act like a barrier. Simply mould it with your fingers by pushing the dough upwards around the sides. Don't worry if it's not perfectly even and looks a bit on the rustic side. As long as it is minimum **3 ½ cm high** it'll hold the lemon filling safely. Prick the dough gently with a fork to stop it from puffing up when baking. Bake for **20 minutes** until the edges are golden brown and the bottom turns pale yellow. Set aside to cool.
4. While the crust is cooling prepare the filling – first zest and juice the **lemons**. Don't use more than 160 ml of juice even if you end up with some extra as it may make the lemon curd filling too runny.
5. In a large bowl combine the **sugar** and

## INGREDIENTS

Makes about 16 squares  
(square baking tin 23cm x 23cm)

### For the shortbread crust:

- 170g plain flour
- 45g icing sugar plus a bit extra for dusting
- 90g unsalted butter, at room temperature, diced
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

### For the lemon filling:

- Zest and juice of 4 medium lemons (which is 4 tablespoons of zest and 160 ml of juice)
- 400g caster sugar
- 40g plain flour
- 5 medium eggs, at room temperature

**lemon zest** and mix with your fingers until the sugar turns pale yellow. Tip in the **flour** and mix well again. **6.** Pour in the **juice**, followed by the **eggs** and whisk with a hand whisk for about half a minute until all ingredients are just combined. (Don't overmix it, you don't want to incorporate too much air and risk the filling to puff up and then collapse.) Carefully pour the filling onto the crust (yes, it's runny!) and bake for **25 minutes**. The lemon curd should be evenly set and resemble jelly, and the crust should turn light brown. Leave the cake in a tin to cool completely, then remove and keep in the fridge for a couple of hours for the filling to thicken up. Dust with the icing sugar, cut into squares and enjoy.



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