



DUTCH BABY WITH LEMON SUGAR



COOK SMART

TRANSFORMERS

Three eggs. Two lemons. Five extraordinarily different desserts. It does not take a mathematical genius to figure out that a couple of very modest ingredients add up to a brilliant, shining moment at the end of a meal. Recipes by Andrea Albin Photographs by Romulo Yanes

We all yearn for desserts that are magical yet uncomplicated—two qualities that, more often than not, are mutually exclusive. Having eggs and lemons on hand, though, allows you to pull the rabbit out of the hat every time. The following recipes do not presume to be especially new or adventurous. They do, however, run the gamut from plain to fancy, and they are satisfyingly economical. Not only are the principal ingredients inexpensive, but in the spirit of “Waste not, want not,” you’ll never end up furtively pouring an egg white down the drain or allowing several yolks to languish in the fridge. We start off with the puffed baked pancake known as a **DUTCH BABY**. It’s a terrific breakfast treat, obviously, but dressed up with lemon sugar and served after a homey supper, it will make every person around the table ecstatic. The simple act of separating eggs is the key to desserts with dramatically different textures. Folding stiffly beaten egg whites into the batter of the **HOT TODDY PUDDING CAKE** ensures that it will divide into two layers as it bakes in the gentle, even heat of a water bath. The whites rise to the top, helping to form a soft, almost impossibly tender cake; underneath it lies a custardy sauce. Stiffly beaten whites are full of air, and baking them relatively quickly results in a meringue that is crisp on the outside and marshmallowy inside, just like the **PAVLOVA WITH LEMON CURD AND BERRIES**. The cake—named for the most famous of all ballerinas and reminiscent of the elaborate tutus of her day—has actually been immortalized by Anna Pavlova biographer Keith Money. “A delicate and fragile thing, cool yet faintly exotic in appearance,” he writes. “The slivers of meringue are like ice floes on the Neva” A creamy lemon curd made with the yolks is just as nuanced as his prose. Now, a wonderful thing happens if you blend beaten whites with a little gelatin to make **LEMON SNOW PUDDING**. When it debuted around 1860, it was considered a company dessert, primarily because of the time >



FOOD STYLING: PAUL GRIMES PROP STYLING: HALEY THURSWELL



PAVLOVA WITH LEMON CURD AND BERRIES; LEMON SNOW PUDDING WITH BASIL CUSTARD SAUCE

and energy it took to beat the eggs. Today, the most basic electric mixer puts it squarely into the “no big deal” camp, and its genuinely ethereal texture, swathed in a satiny, yolky sauce, is a revelation, and much more refreshing than any mousse. Lastly, there is no way we could leave you without a classic **LEMON-GLAZED BUTTER CAKE**. This one will become your new best friend. —Jane Daniels Lear

DUTCH BABY WITH LEMON SUGAR

SERVES 4 TO 6 (BREAKFAST OR DESSERT)

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN START TO FINISH: 30 MIN

A Dutch Baby—basically a cross between a pancake and a popover—is tremendously popular in Seattle; according to local lore, it originated at a restaurant there called Manca’s. Serve it with fresh berries or nothing more than jam or a lavish sprinkling of lemon sugar.

- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 2 tsp grated lemon zest**
- 3 large eggs at room temperature 30 minutes**
- 2/3 cup whole milk at room temperature**
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract**
- 1/8 tsp cinnamon**
- 1/8 tsp grated nutmeg**
- 1/8 tsp salt**
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter, cut into pieces**

EQUIPMENT: a 10-inch cast-iron skillet

ACCOMPANIMENT: lemon wedges

- ▶Put skillet on middle rack of oven and preheat oven to 450°F.
- ▶Stir together sugar and zest in a small bowl.
- ▶Beat eggs with an electric mixer at high speed until pale and frothy, then beat in milk, flour, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt and continue to beat until smooth, about 1 minute more (batter will be thin).
- ▶Add butter to hot skillet and melt, swirling to coat. Add batter and immediately return skillet to oven. Bake until puffed and golden-brown, 18 to 25 minutes.
- ▶Serve immediately, topped with lemon sugar.

HOT TODDY PUDDING CAKE

SERVES 6

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 1¼ HR

The Hot Toddy—for centuries, the classic remedy for a freezing-cold night—is, writes cocktail historian David Wondrich in Imbibe!, “one of the clearest signs I know that there is a providential plan to the universe.” The subtle, malty flavor of good Scotch whisky is carried in this instance by a pudding cake, which separates into two layers as it bakes. Eat this while it’s still warm from the oven.

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1/4 tsp salt**
- 1 cup whole milk**
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice**
- 1/4 cup Scotch (optional)**

- 1/2 stick unsalted butter, melted and cooled**
- 3 Tbsp mild honey**
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest**
- 3 large eggs, separated, at room temperature 30 minutes**
- 1/3 cup sugar**

- ▶Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Butter a 1½-qt shallow baking dish.
- ▶Whisk together flour and salt in a large bowl. Whisk together milk, lemon juice, Scotch (if using), butter, honey, zest, and yolks, then stir into flour mixture.
- ▶Beat whites with an electric mixer at medium speed until frothy. Increase speed to medium-high and add sugar, 1 Tbsp at a time, beating until whites just hold stiff peaks.
- ▶Stir about one third of whites into flour mixture to lighten, then fold in remaining whites gently but thoroughly. Pour batter into baking dish and bake in a water bath (see Tips, page 1.12) until puffed and golden-brown, 45 to 50 minutes. Serve warm.

PAVLOVA WITH LEMON CURD AND BERRIES

Adapted from Toni Brogan

SERVES 6 TO 8

ACTIVE TIME: 35 MIN START TO FINISH: 2 HR

The ruffly white meringue called a Pavlova is all about sublime textures. Here, the crunchy yet marshmallowy meringue meets silky lemon curd, juicy ripe berries, and billows of whipped cream. Virtually the national dish of Australia, the dessert is claimed by New Zealand as well; it was named for the Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova, who toured both countries in 1926. The inspiration for this recipe came from food stylist (and New Zealander) Toni Brogan.

FOR MERINGUE

- 1 cup superfine granulated sugar**
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch**
- 3 large egg whites at room temperature 30 minutes**
- 3 Tbsp cold water**
- 1 tsp distilled white vinegar**

FOR FILLING

- 2/3 cup granulated sugar**
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch**
- 1/8 tsp salt**
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice**
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter**
- 3 large egg yolks**
- 2 tsp grated lemon zest**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 4 cups mixed berries**

- ▶**MAKE MERINGUE:** Preheat oven to 300°F with rack in middle. Trace an approximately 7-inch circle on a sheet of parchment paper. Turn parchment over and put on a baking sheet.
- ▶Whisk together superfine sugar and cornstarch in a small bowl.
- ▶Beat whites with a pinch of salt using an electric mixer at medium speed until they hold soft peaks. Add water (whites will loosen) and beat until whites again hold soft peaks.
- ▶Increase speed to medium-high and beat in sugar mixture 1 Tbsp at a time. After all sugar has been added, beat 1 minute more.
- ▶Add vinegar and beat at high speed until meringue is glossy and holds stiff peaks, about 5 minutes (longer if using hand-held mixer).
- ▶Gently spread meringue inside circle on parchment, making edge of meringue slightly higher than center (the “crater” is for curd and fruit). Bake until meringue is pale golden and has a crust, about 45 minutes (inside will still be marshmallow-like).
- ▶Turn oven off and prop door open slightly with a wooden spoon. Cool meringue in oven 1 hour.

▶**MAKE LEMON CURD WHILE MERINGUE BAKES:** Stir together sugar, cornstarch, and salt in a 2-qt heavy saucepan, then add lemon juice and butter. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking, then continue to simmer, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Lightly beat yolks in a small bowl and whisk in ¼ cup lemon mixture, then whisk into remaining lemon mixture in saucepan. Reduce heat to low and cook, whisking constantly, until curd is thickened, about 2 minutes (do not let boil). Transfer to a bowl and stir in zest. Chill, surface covered with parchment, until cool, about 1½ hours.

▶**ASSEMBLE PAVLOVA:** Beat heavy cream until it just holds stiff peaks, then fold ¼ cup beaten cream into curd to lighten. Spoon lemon curd into meringue and mound berries on top. Serve remaining whipped cream on the side.

▶**COOKS’ NOTES:** For best results, keep oven door closed as much as possible during baking.

- Meringue can be made 2 days ahead and frozen, wrapped well in plastic. Thaw before serving.
- Curd can be made 2 days ahead and chilled.

LEMON SNOW PUDDING WITH BASIL CUSTARD SAUCE

SERVES 6

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 3½ HR (INCLUDES CHILLING)

Judging by the incredulous, delighted looks on the food editors’ faces when they swallowed their first spoonful of what is essentially cold, airy, whipped lemonade, this 19th-century dessert deserves a renaissance. The warm, sunny sweetness of basil infuses the accompanying custard sauce.

FOR SNOW PUDDING

- 1 (¼-oz) envelope unflavored gelatin**
- 1/4 cup cold water**
- 1 cup boiling-hot water**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1 Tbsp grated lemon zest**
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice**
- 3 large egg whites at room temperature 30 minutes**

FOR CUSTARD SAUCE

- 2 cups whole milk**
- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 1 cup packed basil leaves**
- 3 large egg yolks**

GARNISH: basil leaves

▶**MAKE SNOW PUDDING:** Stir gelatin into cold water in a large bowl and let stand 5 minutes. Stir in hot water, sugar, and lemon zest and juice until sugar has dissolved. Set bowl in an ice bath and stir often until mixture is cold and thickened (consistency will be similar to that of raw egg whites), about 45 minutes.

- ▶Beat gelatin mixture with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until very frothy, 1 to 2 minutes. In a separate bowl, beat whites until they hold soft peaks.
- ▶Add whites to gelatin mixture and beat at high speed until tripled in volume and thick enough to form a wide flat ribbon that holds its shape on top of mixture when beater is lifted, about 5 minutes (longer if using a hand-held mixer). Transfer to a large serving bowl and chill until set, about 3 hours.

▶**MAKE CUSTARD WHILE SNOW PUDDING SETS:** Bring milk, sugar, and a pinch of salt just to a boil in a small saucepan, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and stir in basil. Let steep, covered, 30 minutes.

- ▶Put yolks in a small bowl. Strain milk mixture through a sieve into another bowl, pressing hard on and then discarding basil, and return to saucepan. Whisk about ½ cup warm milk mixture into yolks, then whisk into remaining milk in saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until custard coats back of spoon and registers 170°F on an instant-read thermometer. ▶Transfer custard sauce to a bowl and chill, stirring occasionally, until cold, about 2 hours.

▶**ASSEMBLE DESSERT:** Spoon snow pudding into glasses or bowls and top with custard sauce.

▶**COOKS’ NOTES:** The egg whites will not be fully cooked.

- Snow pudding and custard sauce can be chilled separately, tightly covered, up to 1 day.

LEMON-GLAZED BUTTER CAKE

SERVES 6

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN START TO FINISH: 3 HR (INCLUDES COOLING)

The clean, bright flavor of this simple cake makes dinner guests perk up and exclaim, “I haven’t had this for years!” And then they devour what’s on their plates and ask for seconds.

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- 1½ tsp baking powder**
- Rounded 1/4 tsp salt**
- 1/2 cup plus 1 Tbsp whole milk**
- 1 Tbsp grated lemon zest**
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract**
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened**
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar**
- 3 large eggs at room temperature 30 minutes**
- 1 cup confectioners sugar**
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice**

GARNISH: confectioners sugar for dusting

- ▶Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Butter and flour an 8- by 2-inch round cake pan.
- ▶Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir together milk, zest, and vanilla.
- ▶Beat together butter and granulated sugar with an electric mixer at medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition.
- ▶At low speed, mix in flour mixture in 3 batches, alternating with milk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture and mixing until each addition is just incorporated.
- ▶Pour batter into cake pan and smooth top, then rap gently on counter to release any air bubbles. Bake until golden and a wooden pick inserted into center of cake comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes.
- ▶Whisk together confectioners sugar and lemon juice until smooth.
- ▶Turn out cake onto a rack set over a baking sheet, then reinvert. Brush top and side of cake with all of glaze. Cool completely.
- ▶**COOKS’ NOTE:** Cake can be glazed 1 day ahead and kept at room temperature. 🍴