

LEMON, SOUFFLÉS

Mary Berry's Hot Lemon Soufflés

Soufflés can be fiddly to make, but if you follow the recipe carefully you'll get great results and a real sense of achievement.



LEMON SOUFFLÉS



PREPARATION



Preparation time:
about 30 minutes

Cooking time:
about 14 minutes

Makes: 4 soufflés

INGREDIENTS

- Melted butter for greasing
- 2 lemons, juice and zest
- 2 free-range egg yolks, plus 4 free-range egg whites
- 6 rounded tbsp caster sugar, plus extra for the ramekins
- 3 rounded tsp cornflour
- 1 rounded tbsp plain flour
- 90ml/3¼ fl oz double cream
- 110ml/4 fl oz full-fat milk
- Icing sugar for dusting (optional)

EQUIPMENT

- Scales
- 4 medium-sized ramekins (150ml capacity)
- Fine grater
- Lemon squeezer
- Baking tray
- Large saucepan
- One large, one medium and one small bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Hand whisk
- Large metal spoon
- Spatula or palette knife
- Electric hand mixer

METHOD

Stage one

1. Measure out the ingredients and remove the eggs from the fridge.
2. Brush the insides of four ramekins with butter. Add a small amount of sugar to each and turn them to coat the sides and bottom, shaking out any excess. Set aside to chill in the fridge.
3. Use a fine grater to zest the lemons – grate the yellow outer skin, but be careful not to grate the white pith underneath (the pith will make the soufflés bitter). Cut the lemons in half and squeeze the juice. Add the zest to the juice and put to one side.
4. Separate the eggs – crack each egg in half and tip the contents between the two shells, allowing the whites to slide through into the bowl beneath, while the yolks stay in the shells.
5. Put four egg whites into a large bowl and two of the yolks into a separate small bowl (the left-over egg yolks can be saved for scrambled eggs or custard). Add 6 tablespoons of sugar to the small bowl with the egg yolks.
6. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan assisted)/350°F/Gas 4. Put the baking tray into the middle of the oven.

Stage two

7. Put the cream, flour and cornflour into a medium-sized bowl and whisk to a smooth paste.
8. Warm the milk in a large saucepan over a medium heat until just boiling. Remove from the heat.
9. Mix the hot milk into the cream, flour and cornflour mixture with the whisk – add a little to start with and mix well until the mixture is smooth like really thick cream. Press any lumps to the side to break them up. Then add the rest of the milk.
10. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and put it over a gentle heat. Beat vigorously with a hand whisk until it's thickened. It's important to keep whisking all the time so that the mixture doesn't stick.

TOP TIP

Fold in the egg whites very gently - the aim is to fold in the air bubbles without breaking them up. Use a metal spoon or spatula to go round the outside of the bowl and cut through the middle.



11. When you feel it thickening, remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the lemon juice and zest a little at a time. The heat of the pan will continue to cook the mixture.
12. Use a wooden spoon to beat the egg yolks and caster sugar together in the small bowl. Beat them into a thick paste.
13. Add this paste to the mixture in the saucepan and mix well until smooth. Put the saucepan back on the hob to thicken again. Whisk until it begins to bubble and then take it off the heat - the mixture should look like custard. Put it to one side to cool before adding the egg whites.

Stage three

14. Make sure the bowl and whisk are completely clean and grease-free, and make sure there's no yolk with the egg whites. Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl using an electric hand mixer, until soft peaks begin to form - the egg whites should look like clouds.
15. Check the temperature of the mixture in the saucepan before you add the egg whites - it should be body temperature or cooler. Add one large spoonful of the egg whites to the saucepan and beat well with the whisk to make the mixture less stiff. Now use a large metal spoon or spatula to gently fold in the remaining egg whites. Continue until it's a pale yellow mixture with no streaks of egg white.
16. Fill the ramekins to the brim with the mixture and level off with a spatula or palette knife. Run a thumb nail around the inside rim of the ramekins (this helps the soufflés rise evenly without catching on the sides).
17. Place the ramekins on the baking tray in the middle of the oven for about 14 minutes until risen and turning golden. Don't open the oven during cooking. Time and watch the soufflés carefully - take them out as soon as they've risen and are starting to go golden. If you're using smaller ramekins you'll need to reduce the cooking time by a few minutes (5 or 6 smaller soufflés will need about 10 minutes).
18. Dust with icing sugar and serve immediately.



EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS



SHORTENING, LARD AND SUET

Shortening is a general term for fats used in baking, but is normally used to refer to lard, made from pig fat. The vegetable equivalent is sold as vegetable shortening, white spread or vegetable fat and can be substituted for lard. They all have a high fat content of 90g-100g per 100g.

Shortening is mostly used in pastry, and in some biscuits and cakes, to create a crumbly, 'melt-in-the-mouth' texture by breaking up gluten in the dough. It adds richness, but doesn't have much flavour. To compensate for this, butter or margarine is often added.

Suet, the fat taken from around the kidneys and loins in beef, is used in suet pastry, puddings and dumplings, savoury and sweet. The suet gives a moist texture that is light and dense. Vegetable suet is available and can be substituted for beef suet in all recipes.



SALT

A pinch of salt is used in savoury baking to improve the flavour - it's also sometimes used in sweet baking to enhance the sweetness. Salt is almost always added to bread made in the UK and any cook who forgets to add it to a basic loaf will notice as soon as they take a bite - it will be bland and won't taste of bread as we know it.

Too much salt inhibits yeast and leads to a flat, heavy loaf, so always follow a bread recipe carefully when it comes to salt quantities. Make sure the salt doesn't come into direct contact with the yeast.

When a recipe includes butter it's best to use an unsalted butter. Salted butters can vary in saltiness, and it's easier to control the quantity by adding salt separately.