

lemon drizzle cake

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Lemon Drizzle Cake

A plain butter loaf, still hot from the oven, punctured and flooded with a mixture of lemon juice and granulated sugar that soaks in and leaves a crackling crust on top. It is the most-baked cake in Britain by some distance, and the technique — a hot soak that recrystallises — is worth understanding for its own sake.

What makes it work

- **Granulated sugar in the drizzle, not powdered.** Powdered sugar dissolves and makes a glaze. Granulated only partly dissolves in cold juice, and what does not dissolve recrystallises on the surface into the crunchy crust that defines the cake.
- **Hot cake, cold drizzle.** The temperature gap drives the syrup in. Wait until the cake is cool and it sits on top.
- **Skewer it properly.** Forty holes, right to the bottom. This is not a token gesture.
- **Zest into the sugar, not the batter.** Rub the zest into the caster sugar with your fingers before creaming; the abrasion releases the oils and the whole cake tastes twice as lemony for no extra lemon.
- **Leave it in the tin to soak.** The tin holds the syrup against the cake until it is all absorbed.

Ingredients

One 900 g loaf tin. Serves 10.

- 225 g unsalted butter, softened
- 225 g caster sugar
- zest of 3 [lemons](#)
- 4 [eggs](#)
- 225 g self-raising flour, or plain flour with 10 g baking powder
- 3 g fine salt
- 2 tbsp [milk](#)

Drizzle:

- juice of 3 lemons, about 120 ml — see [Lemon juice](#)
- 150 g granulated sugar

Method

Heat the oven to **180 °C / 350 °F**. Butter and line the loaf tin.

Rub the lemon zest into the caster sugar with your fingertips until the sugar is damp and fragrant.

Cream the butter and lemon sugar four minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time, with a spoonful of flour after the second. Fold in the remaining flour and the salt, then the milk.

Bake **45–50 minutes**, until a skewer comes out clean. Cover loosely with foil at 35 minutes if it is browning fast.

Mix the juice and granulated sugar — do not let it dissolve fully.

The moment the cake comes out, prick it all over with a skewer, right through to the base, and spoon the drizzle over slowly, letting each spoonful sink in.

Leave in the tin until completely cold.

Notes

- **Lime, orange, or a mix** all work; grapefruit needs 30 g more sugar.
- A poppy seed version — 40 g of seeds folded in — is the standard variation and changes nothing else.

- **Keeps five days** wrapped, and is better on day two. It also freezes whole.

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