



Laura Osnes's Favorite Strawberry Lemonade Bars

(adapted from this awesome blog www.thebakerchick.com - by Laura's friend Audra) embed link:
<http://the-baker-chick.com/>

These bars are tart and sweet and perfect anytime of year but especially yummy on those Su-huh-mmer Niiii-iiights. See what I did there? It's a Grease reference. Because Laura was in Grease. With me...oh nevermind... Anyhoo, if strawberries aren't your thing you can use blueberries or raspberries. And if they aren't in season, substitute frozen berries!

Ingredients

Crust

1/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter, room temperature
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/4 tsp salt

Filling

1 cup fresh lemon juice
2-3 tsp lemon zest
1/2 cup pureed strawberries (you can make this from about 3/4 cup berries)
1 1/4 cups sugar
4 large eggs
1/4 cup all purpose flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt

Mint sprigs, powdered sugar and **mint whipped cream** (recipe below) to garnish

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350° and grease (you're the one that I want) a 9x13 pan.

Prepare the crust:

In a large bowl cream together the sugar & butter until it is pale and fluffy. Then mix in the flour and salt until the mixture is crumbly like sand. Dump the dough into your greased "you're the one that I want" pan and press it with your fingers until it is evenly distributed throughout the pan. Bake for 15-17 minutes until edges are slightly brown and crumbly.

While the crust is baking make the filling. In bowl of a food processor add the pureed strawberries, fresh lemon juice, grated lemon zest, sugar and eggs and process. Scrape down the sides and add in the flour, baking powder & salt and pulse til smooth. Pour filling over warm crust and put the pan back in the oven for 23-26 minutes til filling is set.

Now comes the hard part. You have to let them cool. Completely. And I know this is going to test every ounce of your will power, but may Laura and I suggest probably putting them in the fridge overnight? Because while these are yummy room temperature, they are AMAAHHZING when they are super cold.



Once cooled, sprinkle the top with Laura's secret ingredient: powdered sugar! She even has a special shaker that she got at that bastion of fine cooking - Duane Reade!! And if you don't have a fancy sugar shaker, just use a fine mesh sieve or a spoon to sprinkle.

Slice into even pieces and garnish with a dollop of mint whipped cream and a sprig of mint.

And five, six, seven, EAT!!

Mint Whipped Cream

(adapted from Martha Stewart) link: <http://www.marthastewart.com/350485/strawberries-mint-whipped-cream>

¼ cup sugar

2 cups of packed mint leaves & stems, coarsely chopped (I used an entire bunch and kept a few sprigs to the side for garnish)

2 cups heavy cream

Make the syrup: In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring sugar, mint, and 2 tablespoons of water to a boil. (I know it sounds like there isn't going to be enough water, but don't worry. Cooking magic happens and there totally is!) Remove from heat and steep 15 minutes.** After steeping, strain the mint through a fine-mesh sieve into a measuring cup, pressing down on it with the back of a spoon to extract as much liquid as possible. You should have about ¼ cup. Discard solids and let cool.

**I wanted to go for a more intense minty flavor, so I doubled the steeping time to 30 minutes. It was delicious but still a little subtle on the mint flavor. Next time I am going to increase both the mint and the steep time.

Whip heavy cream in a large bowl until stiff peaks form. Gently fold in ¼ cup of the syrup.

Garnish to your heart's delight!