

# The Telegraph

## Lemon and ricotta cake with citrus fruits in lemon-thyme syrup recipe

A delicious recipe for an Easter dinner party: tangy lemon and ricotta cake, served with a compote of citrus fruits in a syrup infused with lemon thyme



Lemon and ricotta cake with citrus fruits in lemon-thyme syrup Photo: YUKI SUGIURA



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*Serves eight*

### **For the citrus fruits**

275ml (9½fl oz) freshly squeezed orange juice

175g (6oz) granulated sugar

2 broad strips lemon peel

3 sprigs lemon thyme, plus a couple more for serving (optional)

juice of ½ lemon

2 oranges

2 white grapefruit

2 red grapefruit

### **For the cake**

175g (6oz) butter, softened

175g (6oz) golden caster sugar

grated zest of 4 lemons and juice of 3

3 eggs, separated

250g (9oz) fresh ricotta

100g (3½oz) self-raising flour, sifted

25g (1oz) ground almonds (freshly ground if possible)

1 tsp baking powder

icing sugar, for sifting

First make the citrus fruits so they can chill. Heat the orange juice with the sugar, lemon peel and thyme, stirring from time to time to help the sugar dissolve. Bring to the boil then simmer for about 25 minutes until the mixture is very syrupy. Add the lemon juice and leave to cool.

Cut a slice from the top and bottom of each citrus fruit so that there is a flat base at each end. Sit each one on its base and slice off the peel and pith, cutting from top to bottom and following the curve of the fruit. Cut the fruit into thin slices and pick out any pips. Alternatively, you can remove each segment if you prefer, cutting between the flesh and the membrane surrounding it and easing out the segments. It's more time-consuming, but looks lovely. Try to capture as much juice as possible and add it to the syrup. Put the fruit in a shallow bowl, pour over the syrup, removing the thyme sprigs, and chill.

Beat the butter and sugar together in an electric mixer until pale and fluffy then beat in the lemon zest. Lightly beat the egg yolks with a fork and add gradually, beating well after each addition. Drain off any liquid that is in the ricotta and stir the cheese into the batter. Put the egg whites in a separate bowl and beat until they form medium peaks.

Stir the lemon juice into the batter then fold in the flour, almonds and baking powder. Add 2 big tbsp of the beaten whites to loosen the batter, then fold in the rest. Scrape into a buttered 20cm (8in) spring-form cake tin. Place in an oven preheated to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 and bake for 45 to 50 minutes. A skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean. It is a very moist cake because of the ricotta, and doesn't have the texture of a regular sponge.

Remove the band around the cake and leave to cool a bit. It is lovely served just slightly warm, but you can let it cool completely. Dust with icing sugar and serve with whipped cream and the citrus fruits decorated with fresh sprigs of lemon thyme if you like.

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