

Lime Bars

A make-ahead (up to 1 full day), refreshing citrus dessert that goes well with spicy foods. Regular limes work great. Don't use bottle lime juice!

Servings: 16 - 2"x2" bars (or double recipe in a 13x9 pan & add 2 minutes baking time)

Ingredients

Crust

5 ounces animal crackers
3 tablespoons packed light or dark brown sugar
4 tablespoons of melted butter, cooled slightly
Pinch of salt

Filling

2 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
1 tablespoon grated lime zest, minced
1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
1 large egg yolk
½ cup (key or regular) lime juice

Preparation

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position.
2. Heat oven to 325°.
3. Cut about 12-inch length extra-wide heavy-duty foil and fold cut edges back to form 7.5" width (if you don't have extra-wide fake it, it will still be OK).
4. With folded sides facing down, fit foil securely into bottom and two opposing sides of 8"-square baking pan, allowing excess to overhang pan sides.
5. Spray foil with non-stick cooking spray.

Crust

1. Place animal crackers in food processor and pulse 10 times for about 1 second (until broken down).
2. Process crumbs until evenly fine (about 10 seconds). You should have about 1¼ cups.
3. Add brown sugar and salt and process to combine (10-12 1-second pulses). If sugar lumps remain break them up by hand.
4. Drizzle butter over crumbs and pulse until crumbs are evenly moist with butter (~10 1-second pulses)
5. Press crumbs evenly and firmly into bottom of prepared pan.
6. Bake until deep golden brown (18-20 minutes).

7. Cool on wire rack while making filling
8. Do not turn off oven.

Filling

1. In medium bowl, stir cream cheese, zest, and salt with a rubber spatula until softened, creamy and thoroughly combined.
2. Add sweetened condensed milk and whisk vigorously until incorporated and no lumps of cream cheese remain.
3. Whisk in egg yolk.
4. Add lime juice and whisk gently until incorporated (mixture will thicken slightly, but noticeably).

Assembly/Baking/Cooling/Cutting

1. Pour filling into crust. Spread to corners and smooth surface with a rubber spatula.
2. Bake until set and edges begin to pull away slightly from sides (15-20 minutes).
3. Cool on wire rack to room temperature (1-2 hours).
4. Cover with foil and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled (at least 2 hours).
5. Loosen edges with a pairing knife and lift from baking pan using the foil extensions.
6. Using a sharp knife, cleaned in warm water between cuts, cut into 16 2"x2" squares.
7. Let stand at room temperature 15 minutes before serving.

"The Best Key Lime Bars" by Dawn Yanagihara from *Cook's Illustrated*