

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Lemon Almond Cream Cheese Coffee Cake (from Cook's Illustrated)

I made almost no changes to the original recipe. I did substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Greek yogurt for $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the sour cream. Also, my tube pan has a detachable bottom, so I removed the sides, and then the cake was kind of stuck on the bottom portion with the center tube. The cake was too delicate to lift off of the bottom. I ended up chilling the cake overnight and removing the cake from the base in the morning, when it was firm. Then I let it warm up before serving.

Lemon sugar-almond topping:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1.75 ounces) sugar
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons finely grated zest from 1 lemon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced almonds

Cake:

$2\frac{1}{4}$ cups (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
 $1\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoons baking powder
 $1\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon table salt
10 tablespoons (1 stick plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened but still cool
1 cup plus 7 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon finely grated zest plus 4 teaspoons juice from 1 to 2 lemons
4 large eggs
5 teaspoons vanilla extract
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups sour cream
8 ounces cream cheese, softened

1. For the topping: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Stir together the sugar and lemon zest in a small bowl until combined and the sugar is moistened. Stir in the almonds; set aside.

2. For the cake: Spray a 10-inch tube pan with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a medium bowl; set aside. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar (7.875 ounces), and the lemon zest at medium speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add the eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition, about 20 seconds, and scraping down the beater and sides of bowl as necessary. Add 4 teaspoons vanilla and mix to combine. Reduce the speed to low and add one-third of the flour mixture, followed by half of the sour cream, mixing until incorporated after each addition, 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat, using half of the remaining flour mixture and all of the remaining sour cream. Scrape the bowl and add the remaining flour mixture; mix at low speed until the batter is thoroughly combined, about 10 seconds. Remove the bowl from the mixer and fold the batter once or twice with a rubber spatula to incorporate any remaining flour.

3. Reserve $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups batter and set aside. Spoon the remaining batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Return the now-empty bowl to the mixer and beat the cream cheese, remaining 5 tablespoons sugar, lemon juice, and remaining teaspoon vanilla on medium speed until smooth and slightly lightened, about 1 minute. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the reserved batter and mix until incorporated. Spoon the cheese filling mixture evenly over the batter, keeping the filling about 1 inch from the edges of the pan; smooth the top. Spread the remaining cup of reserved batter over the filling and smooth the top. With a butter knife or offset spatula, gently swirl the filling into the batter using a figure-8 motion, being careful to not drag the filling to the bottom or edges of pan. Firmly tap the pan on the

counter 2 or 3 times to dislodge any bubbles. Sprinkle the lemon sugar-almond topping evenly over the batter and gently press into batter to adhere.

4. Bake until the top is golden and just firm, and a long skewer inserted into cake comes out clean (skewer will be wet if inserted into cheese filling), 45 to 50 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and firmly tap on counter 2 or 3 times (the top of the cake may sink slightly). Cool the cake in the pan on a wire rack for 1 hour. Gently invert the cake onto a rimmed baking sheet (the cake will be topping-side down); remove the tube pan, place a wire rack on top of the cake, and invert the cake sugar-side up. Cool to room temperature, about 1½ hours. Cut into slices and serve.