

## Tarte Aux Citron - French Lemon Tart (adapted from *Baking from My Home to Yours*)

- 1 cup sugar
- Finely grated zest of 3 lemons
- 4 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (from 4-5 lemons—or the case of my super-juicy lemons, only three!)
- 2 sticks plus 5 Tablespoons (21 Tablespoons; 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounces unsalted butter, at room temperature and cut into tablespoon-sized pieces—LOTS of butter!)
- 1 fully baked 9-inch tart shell

Have a thermometer, a strainer, and a blender at the ready. Bring a few inches of water to a simmer in a saucepan.

Put the sugar and zest in a large metal bowl that can be fitted into the pan of simmering water. Off heat, work the sugar and zest together between your fingers until the sugar is moist, grainy, and very aromatic. Whisk in the eggs followed by the lemon juice.

Fit the bowl into the pan (make certain the water doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl) and cook, stirring with the whisk as soon as the mixture feels tepid to the touch. You want to cook the cream until it reaches 180°F. As you whisk the cream over heat—and you must whisk constantly to keep the eggs from scrambling—you'll see that the cream will start out light and foamy, the bubbles will get bigger, and then, as the cream is getting closer to 180°F, it will start to thicken and the whisk will leave tracks. Heads up at this point—the tracks mean the cream is almost ready. Don't stop whisking and don't stop checking the temperature. And have patience - depending on how much heat you're giving the cream, getting to 180 could take as long as 10 minutes.

As soon as you reach 180°F, pull the cream from the heat and strain it into the container of the blender. (You'll have to use a spoon or spatula to stir it around and work it through the strainer.) Discard the zest. Let the cream rest at room temperature, stirring occasionally, until it cools to 140°F, about 10 minutes.

Turn the blender to high and with the machine going, add about 5 pieces of butter at a time. Scrape down the sides of the container as needed while you're incorporating the butter. Once the butter is in, keep the machine going—to get the light airy texture of lemon-cream dreams, you must beat for another three minutes. If your machine overheats, let it rest, and work in 1 minute intervals.

Pour the cream into a container, press a piece of plastic wrap against the surface to create an air-tight seal and chill the cream for at least 4 hours or overnight. When you are ready to make the tart, whisk the cream to loosen it and spoon it into the tart shell.

The Cream can be made as much as four days ahead, kept in the fridge and two months ahead, kept in the freezer. When ready to serve, spoon into the tart shell and enjoy immensely.