Lemon and Ricotta Steamed Cakes

4 small fully set cakes, one cake per dessert portion | Active 18 min | Cook 6 min | Total 30 min (warm service)

Ingredients

• 60 g all-purpose flour (2 oz), with its label cooking guidance followed

• 100 g pasteurized-milk ricotta (3 1/2 oz), drained only if visibly watery

• 30 g granulated sugar (about 2 tbsp plus 1 1/4 tsp)

• 1 large egg, 50 g/1 3/4 oz without shell, fully beaten

• 40 ml pasteurized milk (2 tbsp plus 2 tsp)

• 10 ml neutral oil (2 tsp)

• 10 ml lemon juice (2 tsp), seeds removed

• 2 g finely grated unwaxed lemon zest (about 1 tsp)

• 3 g baking powder (about 3/4 tsp)

• 0.3 g fine salt, a small pinch

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Fork or small whisk, Spoon, Oven mitts, Food thermometer used outside the microwave, Four microwave-safe ramekins, each at least 250 ml/about 1 US cup measured usable capacity, about 8.5 cm/3 1/3 in inside diameter and 5 cm/2 in deep, Two microwave-safe loose covers or vented covers for pairs of ramekins, Mixing bowl, Fine grater and citrus juicer, Thin knife, Two microwave-safe plates that fit the turntable, with room for two ramekins at least 3 cm/1 1/4 in apart

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Egg. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Whisk the ricotta, sugar, beaten egg, milk, oil, lemon juice and zest in the mixing bowl until even. Add the flour, baking powder and salt; stir thoroughly so there are no dry flour pockets. Divide the complete batter equally between the four 250 ml ramekins, approximately 75-80 g raw batter each. Keep each below half its usable capacity.

2. Arrange two ramekins on a microwave-safe plate, at least 3 cm apart, and cover loosely with a microwave-safe vented cover. Microwave at 1000 W baseline on 70% power for 1 1/2 minutes. Carefully exchange their positions and rotate each dish half a turn, then cook 30 seconds more.

3. Check both centers for at least 165°F/74°C and a fully set crumb without a wet floury seam when cut. Use additional 15-30-second bursts if needed, checking each cake. Do not taste raw batter; follow any longer minimum cooking instruction on the flour label. Once fully cooked, stand both cakes covered for 2 minutes.

4. Repeat the same heating, rotation, center checks and covered 2-minute stand for the second pair. Each pair starts with about 2 minutes and may need up to 3 minutes of heating, with the endpoint controlling. Serve all four warm in their ramekins, without an extra sugar dusting, sauce or garnish.

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Two is the cooking batch

Do not replace the pair arrangement with four dishes crowded together. If your turntable cannot fit the stated pair with clearance, cook one at a time, start checking after about 2 minutes and allow a longer total.

In-dish service is intentional

The soft cakes can be eaten directly from the ramekins. They do not need to be firm enough to turn out intact.

Ingredient labels

Ricotta and milk contain milk; flour contains wheat/gluten. Check cheese and baking-powder labels. The cottage-cheese variation also contains milk.

A useful detail

The 30-minute warm-service plan allows 12 minutes of preparation, up to 6 minutes of sequential heating for two batches, two full 2-minute covered stands and 8 minutes for exchanging dishes, checking and serving. One 1000 W microwave cooks the pairs one after the other. Extra center-check bursts extend the plan.

Another way

Replace lemon juice and zest with 10 ml/2 tsp orange juice and 2 g/about 1 tsp finely grated orange zest. The same fully set endpoint applies.

Use 100 g/3 1/2 oz smooth pasteurized cottage cheese instead of ricotta, mashed thoroughly with the fork before mixing. Small curds may remain; the cakes are still fully cooked in their ramekins.

Keep it well

Refrigerate fully cooked leftovers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below, and use within 2 days. For reheating, add 5 ml/1 tsp water to a cake, cover with a vent and use short low-power bursts; stand 2 minutes and verify 165°F/74°C throughout. Never hold a partly cooked ramekin for later finishing.