

Lemon Curd

Lemon curd as we know it in a modern kitchen developed from a nineteenth century technique that could be classified as a type of *white cheese* in that the acidity of lemon juice was used to curdle milk. Nonfermented white cheeses have a history dating back to the bronze age. One of the functions of lemon curd has always been pie filling. Curdled cheese pies encased in pastry are a dish of Medieval origins, possibly originating in Italy, with written documentation as early as the thirteenth century.

So although this particular recipe is modern it can be a stepping stone into period pies or a time-conscious substitute for homemade marmalades (marmalades are also period).

The Recipe:

3/4 cup white sugar
minced peels from 3 lemons
juice from 3 lemons
3 large eggs
4 tbsp butter (half a stick)

1 pint jar, sanitized.

Mix sugar and lemon peel and juice in a saucepan. Add eggs, stirring vigorously with a fork or a whisk. Then add butter and turn on medium-low heat about 10 minutes, stirring continuously.

Lemon curd is ready when the mixture thickens. Pour immediately into the pint jar and refrigerate.

Sources:

Cheese and its Place in Western Civilization by Paul Kindstedt, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2012, p. 49.

A Culinary History of Kentucky: Burgoo, Beer Cheese and Goetta by Fiona Young-Brown, The History Press, 2014, p. 112.

Eat and be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food by John Cooper, Jason Aronson, 1993, p. 80.