LEMON SWISS ROLL

SERVES: 8

This Swiss roll is one of the best recipes for a whisked fatless sponge. It can be baked and filled simply or dressed up for any occasion, and freezes well, too.

FOR THE SPONGE

3 eggs
75g (2½oz) caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
75g (2½oz) plain flour
1 tsp lemon extract

FOR THE FILLING

150ml (5fl oz) double cream
150g (5½oz) lemon curd (see page 193 for my Quick Curd
    recipe if you want to make your own)

Equipment: hand-held electric whisk, 1 rectangular baking tray
26 × 36 × 2cm deep (10½ × 14 × ¾ inch deep) lined with
non-stick baking parchment

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C (fan)/400°F/gas 6.

Whisk the eggs and caster sugar in a large roomy bowl with a hand-held electric whisk for 5–8 minutes until the mix is thick and mousse-like. It should be pale and leave a trail for a number of seconds when you take the whisk out of the mix. Placing your mixing bowl over a pan of simmering water will speed up the mixing.

Sift the flour over the top and add the lemon extract then, using a large metal spoon, gently fold in the flour. This takes a few minutes to get right – don't rush it. You need to retain the air. Mix slowly and in large stirs. Don't be tempted to speed things up as you see unmixed flour regularly appear in the batter. With slow, regular stirs you will see that the batter has thickened, is smooth and no flour remains.

Turn the mixture out onto the lined baking tray and, using an angled palette knife or the back of a spoon, gently push the mixture into a large rectangle, leaving just a tiny margin around the side of the parchment. This batter is not runny, so it is important that you smooth it out evenly across the tray so that it is an even thickness all over. Make sure the batter is as thick at the edges as it is in the middle. It will not find its own level while baking – it will stay put! The mixture will not run in the oven so don't be afraid to go close to the edge.

Pop the tray straight into the oven and bake for 8–10 minutes, keeping a close eye on your precious sponge. Remove it from the oven when it is golden and slightly risen.

Transfer the sponge (still in the tin) to a cooling rack and leave for 5 minutes. When the tray is cool enough to handle, but before the sponge has cooled, sprinkle the baked surface of the sponge with caster sugar. Lay a piece of non-stick baking parchment or a piece of cotton cloth/a tea towel over the top, then a baking sheet, and quickly flip the whole thing over. Peel off the original baking parchment. Carefully and loosely roll up the sponge using the new piece of parchment or the cloth as an aid then leave and allow to cool completely in the rolled-up position. This prevents the roll cracking later.

When ready to fill the sponge, whisk the double cream to soft peaks with a hand-held electric whisk then stir in the lemon curd. I like to mix the cream and curd quite loosely so that there are streaks of lemon.

Gently unroll the cooled sponge. Leave it on the paper or cloth for now but just make sure it hasn't stuck to the paper anywhere. Your good sprinkling of caster sugar should have prevented this.

Spread the creamy lemon mix over the sponge in an even layer then use the paper or cloth again to help re-roll and bring together your Swiss roll. For perfect presentation, trim the ends with a sharp serrated knife and enjoy them as a snack reward for your good work.

Dust with a sprinkle of caster sugar then transfer to a serving plate, making sure the seam is perfectly hidden underneath.

Rolling a Swiss roll

It is important to remove the backing paper from the sponge and then roll it up while still warm. This prevents the sponge from cracking. Your finished Swiss roll will amaze your friends – it will be swirly, smooth and beautiful.

LET ME SHOW YOU . . .

My Lemon Swiss Roll Video