

Lemon Rolls

These lemon sweet rolls are soft, fluffy, and bursting with bright citrus flavor. Made with a milk-bread dough, swirled with lemon sugar filling, layered with sticky lemon curd, and finished with tangy lemon cream cheese frosting, they're a fresh, bakery-style twist on classic cinnamon rolls, without the cinnamon.



5 from 6 votes

Ingredients

For the Tangzhong

- 155 g water
- 32 g bread flour *see notes below for measuring*

For the Roll Dough

- 66 g granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 485 g bread flour *see notes below for measuring*
- 6 g instant yeast
- 4 g fine sea salt
- 78 g heavy cream room temperature
- 78 g whole milk room temperature
- 55 g large egg room temperature
- Tangzhong from above
- 113 g unsalted butter cool room temperature

Lemon Sugar Filling

- 168 g unsalted butter cool room temperature
- 150 g light brown sugar packed
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 100 g lemon curd store-bought or homemade

Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting

- 84 g unsalted butter room temperature
- 4 ounces cold cream cheese
- 120 g powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- Lemon curd for the tops

Instructions

1. First, make the tangzhong. Whisk the water and flour in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened into a roux, about **4-5 minutes**. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.
2. Rub the lemon zest into the sugar until it looks like wet sand.
3. Whisk together the flour, lemon sugar, yeast, and salt in a stand mixing bowl. Add the heavy cream, milk, egg, and tangzhong. Knead on low speed with the dough hook for **2 minutes** until it forms a rough dough ball.
4. With the mixer running on low, add the butter 1 tablespoon at a time, letting it fully incorporate before adding more. Then, continue kneading for **12 minutes** or until the dough is smooth and elastic.
5. Form the dough into a smooth round ball. Place it seam-side down into a large, lightly greased bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside to rest for **30 minutes**.
6. Combine the butter, brown sugar, lemon zest, and vanilla until smooth.

7. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface into a **21x15-inch** rectangle. Evenly spread the lemon-sugar mixture across the dough, leaving a 1-inch border at the top clean. Then spread the lemon curd on top.
8. Use a pizza cutter to cut **twelve 1 3/4-inch** strips. Roll each strip away from you, then carefully transfer them to a parchment-lined or buttered **9x13 baking pan**.
9. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and set it aside to rise for **1-2 hours** or until the rolls double. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to **325°F/162°C**.
10. Bake the rolls for **30-35 minutes** or until the tops are light golden brown.
11. While the rolls are baking, make the cream cheese frosting. In a stand mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and butter until combined. Then, mix in the powdered sugar. Keep beating on low speed until the frosting is light and fluffy, then mix in the lemon zest and heavy cream.
12. Let the pan cool on a wire cooling rack for **15 minutes**, then spread the cream cheese frosting on top. Top with extra lemon curd and serve warm!

Notes

***Measure your dry ingredients properly.** This is my **#1 baking tip!** Do not ever scoop a measuring cup into your flour, as this always leads to using too much flour. Instead, use the *spoon-level method*. This means fluffing the flour first, then spooning it into your measuring cup/spoon. **For the BEST results, use a kitchen scale!**

Storage: Because the lemon rolls are topped with lemon curd, storing them in the fridge when not serving them is best.

Make ahead: Once the rolls are assembled, cover the top of the baking pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. The next day, let the rolls double in size at room temperature for a few hours before baking. Do not make them more than one day in advance, or the yeast will start to ferment.

Reheating: Warm the rolls in the microwave or oven until gooey and melty before serving!

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