

Classic Lemon Madeleines

The origin of the madeleine, the shell-shaped sponge cake eaten as a cookie, is disputed, although most food scholars believe it originated in the Lorraine city of Commercy. It traveled first to the court of Louis XV at Versailles and then on to Paris, gaining converts at each stop. Today, the *pâtisseries* of Commercy are still considered France's premier makers of madeleines, and boxes of madeleines de Commercy are sold throughout the country.

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup (3 oz./90g) granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. almond extract
- 1/2 cup (2 1/2 oz./75 g) all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 4 Tbs. (1/2 stick) (2 oz./60 g) unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- Confectioners' sugar for dusting (optional)

Directions:

Preheat an oven to 375°F (190°C). Using a pastry brush, brush softened butter over each of the 12 molds in a madeleine pan, carefully buttering every ridge. Dust the molds with flour, tilting the pan to coat the surfaces evenly. Turn the pan upside down and tap or shake it gently to dislodge the excess flour.

In a large bowl, combine the eggs, granulated sugar and salt. Using a wire whisk or a handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat vigorously until pale, thick and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the vanilla and almond extracts. Sprinkle the sifted flour over the egg mixture and stir or beat on low speed to incorporate.

Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the lemon zest and half of the melted butter just until blended. Fold in the remaining melted butter.

Divide the batter among the prepared molds, using a heaping tablespoon of batter for each mold. Bake the madeleines until the tops spring back when lightly touched, 8 to 12 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and invert it over a wire rack. Let the madeleines cool on the rack for 10 minutes. Using a fine-mesh sieve, dust the tops with confectioners' sugar and serve. Makes 12.

Adapted from Williams Sonoma Foods of the World Series, *Paris*, by Marlena Spieler (Oxmoor House, 2004)