**Lemon Poppy Seed Cake**  
  
A variation of my lemon pound cake, this lemon poppy seed cake is laced with fresh lemon zest, filled to the brim with nutty, crackly poppy seeds, and drizzled with a bright lemon glaze. The texture is just what you hope for in a homemade cake — moist and melt-in-your-mouth tender — and the cake keeps well for days. My grandmother would have called it a “company cake” since it’s the perfect treat to have on hand when friends and family come over.

Servings: One 10-inch bundt cake, about 16 servings  
Prep Time: 25 Minutes  
Cook Time: 70 Minutes  
Total Time: 1 Hour 35 Minutes

**Ingredients**

**For the Cake**

3 cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off with a knife   
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ cup poppy seeds  
1 cup low-fat buttermilk (see note)  
Finely grated zest of 3 lemons (about 3 gently packed tablespoons)  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened  
2¼ cups granulated sugar, plus more for the pan  
3 large eggs

**For the Syrup**

¼ cup water  
¼ cup granulated sugar  
1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice

**For the Glaze**

About 1 cup confectioners' sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 325°F and set an oven rack in the middle position. Spray a 10-inch Bundt pan with non-stick cooking spray and dust with sugar. Be sure the entire pan is coated (see note below).

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, and poppy seeds. Set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the buttermilk, lemon zest and lemon juice. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or beaters), cream the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then beat in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl again. With the mixer on low speed, beat in one-quarter of the flour mixture, then one-third of the buttermilk mixture. Beat in another quarter of the flour mixture, then another third of the milk mixture. Repeat with another quarter of the flour mixture and the remaining milk mixture. Finally, beat in the remaining flour mixture. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl, and give a quick mix with a rubber spatula to make sure all of the ingredients are well incorporated.

Spoon the thick batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top with a rubber spatula. Bake for 65 to 75 minutes, or until the top of the cake is golden and a cake tester comes out clean. Cool the cake in the pan for ten minutes on a rack.

While the cake cools, make the syrup. Combine the water and granulated sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice.

Invert the warm cake onto the rack. Slip a large piece of parchment paper or aluminum foil under the rack to catch all the drips from the syrup. Gradually brush the hot syrup over the cake, letting it soak in (a little syrup will drip off, but try not to rush so that most of it is absorbed). Allow the cake to cool completely, about one hour. When the cake is cool, carefully transfer it to a serving platter.

To make the glaze: stir the confectioners' sugar and lemon juice in a small bowl, mixing until completely smooth. dd more confectioners' sugar if necessary to make a thick, opaque glaze (it should be thicker than you'd think -- you want it the consistency of honey or molasses). Drizzle the glaze over the top of the cake, letting it drip down the sides. Let the glaze harden before slicing and serving the cake, about 15 minutes. The cake will keep nicely for 3 days if kept covered on the countertop.

Notes  
  
You'll need 3 large lemons for this recipe

As the recipe indicates, I grease the Bundt pan with nonstick cooking spray and then dust it with sugar. It has always worked beautifully for me, but a number of readers have mentioned problems with the cake sticking. If you’d prefer to use a different method, treat the pan by generously coating it with butter and then dusting it with flour, or use a nonstick baking spray with flour like Pam with Flour or Baker’s Joy. (Also, it's best not to use a Bundt pan with an intricate design for this cake, as they are more prone to sticking.) Another option (that is foolproof) is to use two 8½ x 4½-inch loaf pans instead of a Bundt pan. Loaf pans are much less prone to sticking, and you can line them with parchment paper for extra insurance. To prepare the loaf pans, spray them with nonstick baking spray, line the bottoms with parchment, and then spray them again. The bake time will be 50 to 60 minutes, and you will only need half of the soaking syrup.

**Freezer-Friendly Instructions:** The cake can be frozen (without the glaze) for up to 3 months. After it is completely cooled, double-wrap it securely with aluminum foil or plastic freezer wrap, or place it in heavy-duty freezer bag. Thaw overnight on the countertop before serving (add the glaze after the cake is thawed)