

# An Unusual Culinary Column: The Duck & Chicken Egg Showdown

By Karen Kain

If you are into baking you probably have wondered which is better to bake with, a chicken egg or duck egg.

For this column I decided to put this query to rest. So, I got some of my local peeps together and had a duck and chicken egg bake off.

First, I researched the difference between the two fowl eggs. I came across some interesting information. Duck eggs are known for being higher in fat than chicken eggs. I also read that duck eggs make whatever you bake taste richer in flavor, and make cakes come out fluffier. Duck eggs are clearly larger in size and are definitely harder to crack. Both eggs are similar in nutritional content, but duck eggs are higher in good fat, protein, and have a little more cholesterol. Duck eggs are also higher in iron, B12, vitamin A, and folate. Both eggs cook up nicely when scrambled. Another important note, if you are allergic to chicken eggs you may want to try duck eggs under a doctor's supervision.

I started out by preparing two batches of my favorite brownie recipe. I baked one with chicken eggs and then another with duck eggs. Next, Makena, Merica, Nyah, and Sophia, put their chef's hats on and we baked two lemon cakes. We didn't have to look far to find our taste testers to help settle our quandary.

Here is what we found. The brownies baked with the duck eggs took



longer to cook. They actually came out fluffier and rose higher than the chicken egg version. They also stuck to the pan more than the chicken egg brownies. I found seven taste testers to share their opinions with me. My first taste tester preferred the duck egg brownie, because it had a richer chocolate taste. One person said they didn't like the flavor of the duck egg brownie at all. That surprised me because I could not tell the difference in the taste, but clearly saw a difference in texture. At the end of the day, the general consensus was that the duck egg brownies were too fluffy. Most of us expect brownies to be gooey and crunchy. Baking brownies using duck eggs made them soft and fluffy, more like a cake. Overall everyone preferred the brownies baked with chicken eggs.

Things got a lot more fun when the girls showed up. This lemon cake recipe is fabulous, no matter the eggs you use to bake it. The recipe was spot on and baked up just as directed. The cream cheese frosting is a perfect match. The girls had fun in the kitchen and worked well together. We took the voting seriously and talked in great detail

about our findings. The duck egg cake was denser and actually taller than the chicken egg cake. The cake baked with the chicken eggs was surprisingly fluffier and softer, not what we expected. The texture was what really made the difference between the two cakes. Most of us could taste the unique flavor the duck eggs gave the cake. I am not saying that it was bad, but it definitely had a different taste to

it. The cake made with the chicken eggs was more yellow in color, which was not what one would expect. Out of the seven of us who were taste testing, two preferred the duck egg cake. The reason was the texture. I could clearly tell the difference in the flavor between the cakes, but I really could not say which I liked better. I would happily make either or both again.

These results were not exactly what I had anticipated. I fully expected to have the duck egg brownies and cake beat the chicken egg version hands down. After this experiment, I would not use duck eggs again for brownies. I will continue to bake cakes with duck eggs. I might mix the two eggs together next time and see what happens.

## Stacy's Fudge Brownies

### Ingredients:

- 4 Ounces semi-sweet Baker's chocolate
- 2 Sticks of butter
- 4 Eggs
- 2 Cups Sugar
- 1 Cup flour
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla
- ½ Cup walnuts, optional
- Powdered sugar, optional

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease your baking pan. Melt the chocolate and butter in a medium saucepan. In a large mixing bowl add all the ingredients together and bake in a greased pan for 20-25 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes then transfer to a wire rack. Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.

## Lemon Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

### Ingredients:

- 2 ½ Cups all-purpose flour
- ½ Teaspoon baking powder
- ½ Teaspoon baking soda
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- 1 Teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 Sticks unsalted butter, room temp

- 1 ½ Cups sugar
- 2 Large eggs plus 3 large egg yolks
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 Cup low-fat buttermilk
- 3 Drops of lemon essential oil, optional

### For the icing

- 8 Ounces cream cheese, room temp
- 1 Stick unsalted butter, room temp
- 2 ¾ Cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 Tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, divided
- 1 Teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 Teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ⅛ Teaspoon salt
- 3 Drops of lemon essential oil, optional

### Directions:

#### For the cake

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter and flour two 8-by-2-inch cake pans. Tap out any excess flour. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and lemon zest together. Using a standard mixer, beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Put the mixer on low and beat in the eggs and yolks, one at a time. Beat in the lemon juice. Add the lemon essential oil drops. Beat in the flour and buttermilk, alternating back and forth, ending with buttermilk. Pour the batter into the two pans, smoothing the tops over. Bake for 30-35 minutes until the cakes pull away from the sides. Cool for 10 minutes. Run a knife around the edges then transfer the cakes to a wire rack to fully cool.

#### For the frosting

Using a standard mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and butter together on medium speed until all the lumps are out and the batter is smooth. This may take up to 3 minutes. Reduce the mixer speed to low, add the powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, lemon zest, vanilla, salt, and the lemon essential oil. Turn up the mixer to high speed after the sugar has been mixed in and beat for 3 minutes. Add the remaining lemon juice if needed. If you need to trim the tops off the cakes to get a flat surface, use a serrated knife. Put the bottom cake onto a cake stand. Tuck some wax paper underneath the edges of the cake to protect it while you frost it. Put a nice layer of frosting on the top of the bottom cake. Gently lay the top cake over the bottom cake, with the cut side down. (I did not have to cut either cake). Frost. Place the cake in the refrigerator for 40 minutes to set. This will give you the cleanest cut for slicing. Bring the cake to room temperature before serving.

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