

Recipe by Julia Heffelfinger

Lemon-Thyme Scones with Medjool Dates

Makes 8 Large Scones



These tender, flaky scones are scented with fresh thyme and lemon zest and studded with sweet medjool dates. They're a lovely bite to go with your morning tea, or served alongside a weekend brunch spread. For layered, crumbly scones, there are two important rules to follow: keep your ingredients cold and work your dough as little as possible. In this recipe, I call for frozen butter grated on a box grater. This is an easy way to incorporate the butter into the flour with minimal handling. While you may be tempted to reach for your food processor for this recipe, use your hands or a pastry cutter so you don't overwork your dough. Overhandling the dough will give you dense scones. Before baking, I pop the dough back in the fridge or freezer until it is very cold. Cold butter creates steam which gives you those coveted flaky layers.

Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

2½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon kosher salt

½ cup (1 stick) frozen unsalted butter, grated on a box grater

1 cup pitted and chopped [Rancho Meladuco](#) medjool dates (about 6 large dates)

2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, plus more for garnish

½ cup light brown sugar

1 large egg

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon zest

½ cup plus 2 Tablespoons cold heavy cream

Demerara sugar, for sprinkling (optional)

Icing

1 cup confectioners' sugar

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1 Tablespoon fresh lemon zest, plus 1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Pinch of kosher salt

5 Tablespoons heavy cream or water, plus more as needed

1. **Make the Scones** In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder and salt. Scatter the grated frozen butter over the top and work in with a cutter or your fingers until the butter forms pea-size pieces. Add the dates and thyme and gently toss to coat in the flour.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the brown sugar with the egg, vanilla extract, lemon zest and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the cream. Create a well in the dry ingredients and add the wet ingredients. Using your hands, mix until the scone dough just comes together and everything is evenly moistened.
3. Dust your work surface with flour, then dump out the scone dough. Press the dough into an 8-inch circle, about 1-inch thick. If your dough is too sticky, sprinkle it with more flour. Wrap the scone disc tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to overnight.
4. When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400°F and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Remove the scone disc from the refrigerator and discard the plastic wrap. Cut into 8 wedges and arrange on the prepared baking sheet. Brush the tops with the remaining 2 tablespoons of cream and sprinkle with demerara sugar. If needed, return your scones to the refrigerator while your oven preheats. You want the dough to be very cold when it goes in the oven. Bake the scones for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown on top and around the edges. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely.
6. **Meanwhile, Make the Icing.** In a small bowl whisk all of the ingredients together, adding the cream 1 tablespoon at a time, until smooth.
7. Drizzle the icing over the scones and garnish with more fresh thyme leaves. Enjoy!

MAKE AHEAD This recipe can be prepared through step 3 and stored in the freezer for up to 1 month. When ready to bake, remove the scone dough from the freezer and let sit at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing and baking. The baked scones can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.