

# Berry Gratin with Lemon Sabayon



## WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Sabayon is a thick, slightly frothy, and creamy dessert sauce, popular in France and Italy (where it is known as zabaglione). With its fresh, slightly warmed berries and delicate, caramelized sugar crust, this dessert is a simple summertime pleasure.

We started with the fruit, selecting a mixture of raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. A brief stay in the oven heated the berries and released enough juices, and also maintained the pure berry flavor that tasters wanted. We found that lemon was the best complement to the fruit, with a mixture of zest and juice providing the most complex flavors. Three egg yolks and a combination of water and lemon juice produced a light consistency and a pleasantly strong lemon flavor. A moderate amount of sugar sweetened the sabayon sauce without overwhelming it, and a pinch of salt rounded out the flavors.

With the ingredients chosen, it was time to refine our technique. We needed to dissolve the sugar fully and whip enough air into the sauce to create the desired frothy texture. Whisking the egg yolks and sugar together in a bowl, off heat, dissolved most of the sugar. Setting the bowl over a pan of simmering water while continuing to whisk dissolved the rest. After adding the remaining ingredients, whisking constantly increased the volume threefold. (It is necessary to whisk constantly to ensure that the yolks closest to the heat don't overcook and curdle.) Once the sabayon is the proper thickness, it should be removed immediately and whisked for an additional 30 seconds to cool slightly. To assemble the dessert, we simply spooned the sabayon over the warmed fruit and added a sprinkling of sugar, which we quickly caramelized with a kitchen torch.

## INGREDIENTS

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### *Lemon Sabayon*

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated lemon zest, and 3 tablespoons juice from 1 large lemon
- pinch table salt
- 3** large egg yolks
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar (2 1/3 ounces)

### *Berries*

- 1** cup fresh raspberries
- 1** cup fresh blackberries
- 1** cup fresh blueberries
- 3** tablespoons sugar for caramelized crust

## INSTRUCTIONS

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When making the sabayon, make sure the heat under the simmering water is not set too high. If the egg yolks overheat, they will scramble. Constant whisking is also required. Although we prefer to make this recipe with a mix of raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries, you can use three cups of just one berry if that's what you have on hand.

- 1. FOR THE SABAYON:** Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine the water, lemon zest, lemon juice, and salt in a small bowl and set aside.
3. Whisk the egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl until frothy, about 1 minute. Set the bowl over a pan of simmering water. Continue whisking until the mixture begins to thicken, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the lemon mixture and continue cooking, whisking constantly, until the mixture is thick, light yellow, and tripled in volume, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove the bowl from the saucepan, whisk constantly for about 30 seconds to cool, then set aside while preparing the berries, occasionally whisking the mixture.
- 4. FOR THE BERRIES:** Combine the berries in a wide, shallow 2-quart broiler-safe gratin dish or divide among 6 ramekins or individual gratin dishes set on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake the berries until the fruit is warm and just beginning to release its juices, about 8 minutes. Remove the berries from the oven. Spoon the lemon sabayon over the berries and sprinkle with the sugar. Ignite a kitchen torch and caramelize the sugar. Serve immediately.

## SERVES 6

