

## Title:

Lemons Add Zest to Life

## Word Count:

660

## Summary:

Lemon trees laden with their winter crop, boughs drooping under the weight of many hued lemons: dark green, lighter green becoming suffused with yellow, vibrant yellow bursting with life, then as they go unpicked and overripe a flush of orange seeps into the knobbly fruit. On hot summer's days the lemon comes into its own. Refreshing, iced, home-made Lemonade garnished with mint to slake your thirst - much healthier than commercial fizzy drinks, despite the sugar.

## Keywords:

lemons,lemonade,Vitamin C,lemonade recipe,lemon,lemon juice,lemon zest,zest

## Article Body:

Lemon trees laden with their winter crop, boughs drooping under the weight of many hued lemons: dark green, lighter green becoming suffused with yellow, vibrant yellow bursting with life, then as they go unpicked and overripe a flush of orange seeps into the knobbly fruit. Until I came to South Africa lemons came from a shop: smooth, uniform yellow skins all year round. Now I have learned to appreciate their seasonal bounty, struggling to use up all the fruit in winter, hoarding away the squeezed juice of the excess lemons in the freezer for summer, when the lemons must come from the shop again and are more expensive and less juicy.

This is the time to think up a hundred and one ways to use a lemon, to dig out all the recipes requiring a lot of lemons: Lemon Curd, Lemon Cake, Three Fruit Marmalade with grapefruit and lemons to balance the sweetness of the oranges. Jane Grigson's Fruit Book has a wonderful sounding Lemon Tart recipe, that I can't wait to try, it sounds like the sort of marvel you'd get from a good French patisserie.

Roast chicken can be kept moist and succulent as it roasts, with a lemon stuffed into its cavity. Pierce the lemon's skin a few times to let the juice seep through, but put it in whole. A spritz of lemon juice on green vegetables such as broccoli and spinach, lifts the flavour and replaces some of the vitamin C lost in cooking too. I use up lots of lemons making jam in the strawberry season in spring and early summer. Lemon juice is an essential addition to the soft

fruit, to add the pectin that makes it set. Most of my freezer stock of juice will go on that.

On hot summer's days the lemon comes into its own. Refreshing, iced, home-made Lemonade garnished with mint to slake your thirst - much healthier than commercial fizzy drinks, despite the sugar. It is additive-free, with loads of Vitamin C and far more delicious than anything that comes in a can.

### <b>Recipe for Lemonade</b>

3 large lemons  
sugar  
soda water

Remove the peel very thinly from the lemons, taking just the yellow zest and leaving all the white pith. A potato peeler works well for this. Put it all into a heavy bottomed pan and cover with 2cm/1" water. Cover with a lid and warm over a very low heat. Do not let the water quite boil or it will bring out the bitterness of the peel. Once the water is strongly flavoured, take off the heat and allow to cool. Strain it into a jug. Squeeze the juice from the lemons and add to the jug, then stir in sugar to taste. It should be sweet and strong flavoured, as you will dilute it to serve. Serve with soda water added, if you like a fizz, or plain iced water and garnish with some slices of lemon and sprigs of mint. The undiluted lemonade keeps for several days in the fridge.

Lemons are a great health boost in winter, adding essential Vitamin C to the diet, to help fight off colds and flu. They also help expel mucus, so are excellent for chesty colds and coughs. My son, who has a tendency to asthma, has a cup of hot honey and lemon every morning, which he luckily likes - 1 teaspoon of good raw honey and a tablespoon of lemon juice with hot water poured over - which helps keep his chest clear in winter.

I recently learned a housekeeping tip from Morocco: use a lemon to clean copper and brass. Just rub the cut edge over brass bedknobs or those wonderful Moroccan door plates to bring up a shine, then buff with a soft cloth. The kids thought that was a great idea and now keep running off with half squeezed lemons to polish the spare room bedknobs!

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