



Incredibly Easy Italian Lemon Soda for One

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 5 / Cook Time 1 / Serves 1 - 1

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

dissolve: to stir an ingredient, like sugar, into another ingredient, like water, until they become one substance; or to melt or liquefy a solid food, such as butter, chocolate, or sugar.

juice: to extract or squeeze out the juice of a fruit or vegetable, like a lemon, orange, or carrot, often cutting open or peeling the fruit or veggie first to access its flesh.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

microwave: to heat or cook food or liquid quickly in a microwave oven, which uses high-frequency electromagnetic waves to generate heat in the food's water molecules.

Equipment

- Microwave
- Microwave-safe mug
- Potholder
- Measuring spoons
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife (a butter knife works great)
- Citrus squeezer (optional)
- Drinking glass

Ingredients

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- 2 tsp sugar

- 2 tsp water
- 1 lemon
- 1 can sparkling water

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Instructions

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measure + stir + microwave + dissolve

Measure and combine **2 teaspoons water** and **2 teaspoons sugar** in a microwavable mug. Stir and microwave for 30 seconds. As the water heats, the sugar will dissolve. Carefully remove the mug with a potholder and stir again. Let the mixture cool.

fill + slice + juice + stir

Once the sugar water mixture cools, fill a drinking glass with ice. Slice **1 lemon** and squeeze the juice over the ice. Add the simple syrup (sugar water) and top the glass with **1 can of sparkling water**. Stir and say "Cheers" in Italian: "Salute" (Sah-LOO-teh)!

Featured Ingredient: Lemon!

Hi! I'm Lemon!

"I just love the sun, don't you? That's because I'm a lemon, and we grow so much better in sun and warmth. My skin is a lovely, sunny yellow color. I'm a citrus fruit, but I'm not sweet like an orange. So if you bite into me, your mouth might pucker! But if you squeeze out my juice, then add water and sugar to it, you'll enjoy the sweet and sour taste of lemonade! My zest and juice can bring a wonderful brightness to many dishes."

History

Lemon trees are small evergreen trees thought to be native to Asia. Sometime in the first century, they came to Italy and the Mediterranean region. Although the trees were widely distributed throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean countries between the 8th and 11th centuries, they weren't cultivated to a great extent until the middle of the 1400s in Italy. Spanish explorers brought lemon seeds with them to the Americas later in the 15th century. By the 19th century, you could find lemon trees in Florida and California.

Today, California and Arizona produce 95 percent of the entire lemon crop in the United States.

During the European Renaissance, fashionable ladies used lemon juice as a way to redden their lips! Today you might find people with naturally blond or light brown hair using lemon juice, diluted with water, to lighten their hair. This method is subtle and requires exposure to sunlight to see results, so be sure to put sunscreen on your skin!

Lemons were once so rare that kings would give them away as gifts.

Anatomy & Etymology

There are two different types of lemons—acidic and sweet. The most common acidic varieties include Eureka and Lisbon. The acidic types are grown commercially, and the sweet types are grown mainly by home gardeners. Lemon trees bloom and produce fruit year-round. Each tree can produce up to 500 to 600 lemons annually.

Lemons are hybrids of bitter or sour oranges and citrons, another type of citrus fruit.

Lemons are technically berries. All citrus fruits are berries!

Lemons are protected by a rind or peel and a lining of spongy, white tissue called the "pith." When zesting lemon peel for a recipe, you want to avoid including the pith, which is bitter. Lemon flesh is plump, full of juice, and studded with seeds.

Common types of lemons include Eureka, Lisbon, and Meyer. Meyer lemons have a sweeter, more floral taste and aroma. They are a combination of a lemon and a sweet orange. Eureka lemons are the most prolifically grown lemon in the world. They have pointed, tapered ends.

The word "lemon" is from the Middle English "lymon," from the Old French "limon," which is from the Arabic "līmūn," a collective term for citrus fruits.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

To choose lemons with the most juice, look for those with thin peels and are heavy for their size. There are about three tablespoons of lemon juice in one lemon and about eight seeds.

Lemon juice is sour by itself, but you can add lemon juice and zest from the rind to bring an acidic balance to a sweeter recipe, like cakes, cookies, and curds. It also brightens up vinaigrettes, marinades, and risottos. Lemons can be squeezed over grilled, fried, or roasted chicken, fish, or vegetables. You can make lemonade with the juice and tea from the lemon leaves.

Lemon juice keeps cut pears, apples, bananas, and avocados from turning brown because the acid helps keep the fruit from oxidizing.

Nutrition

Vitamin C! The rind of the lemon has the most vitamin C. Since lemons are high in vitamin C, they have been used throughout history to prevent scurvy—a disease that causes bleeding gums, loose teeth, and aching joints. To this day, the British Navy requires ships to carry enough lemons so that every sailor can have one ounce of lemon juice a day. The demand for lemons and their scurvy-preventing properties hit a peak during the California Gold Rush of 1849. Miners were willing to pay large sums for a single lemon. As a result, lemon trees were planted in abundance throughout California.

Lemon oil, extracted from lemon peel, cannot be ingested. However, when diluted and applied to a person's skin, there is evidence that it acts as an antibacterial and antifungal. Diffused in the air or added to bath water as aromatherapy, it can ease anxiety and stress, lift mood, and sharpen brain function.

Citrus fruits, like lemons and limes, have citric acid, which can help prevent kidney stones from forming.