



LEMON & LIME TALKING POINTS

2. A Slice of Lemon & Lime History



- The history of the lemon and lime is not clear. Tracking the progress of the **lemon tree from its origin in Assam (a state in India)** and northern Burma to China, across Persia and the Arab world to the Mediterranean, is difficult because of the lemon's adaptability to hybridization.
- The lemon was probably unknown to the ancient Greeks and Romans, but it was introduced into Spain and North Africa some time between the years ad 1000 and 1200. It was further distributed through Europe by the crusaders, who found the fruit growing in Palestine. In 1494 the fruit was being cultivated in the Azores and shipped largely to England.
- It appears that the all-American summer drink, lemonade, may have had its origin in medieval Egypt. Although the lemon originates farther to the east, and lemonade may very well have been invented in one of the eastern countries, the earliest written evidence of lemonade comes from Egypt.
- Limes probably originated in the Indonesian archipelago or the nearby mainland of Asia. **The Arabs may have taken limes, as well as lemons, from India to the eastern Mediterranean countries and Africa** around ad 1000. Limes were introduced to the western Mediterranean countries by returning crusaders in the 12th and 13th centuries.
- Columbus took citrus-fruit seed, probably including limes, to the West Indies on his second voyage in 1493, and the trees soon became widely distributed in the West Indies, Mexico, and Florida.

3. How Do Lemons & Limes Grow?

- **Lemons and limes grow on a tree in tropical and subtropical climates.** Lemons and limes need full sun and warm temperatures to grow their best. They actually stop growing when temperatures dip below 50 F.
- While many types of citrus varieties are adapted either to the high humidity of Florida and the Gulf Coast or the low humidity of the Southwest, lemons and limes can thrive in either climate.
- Lemons and limes can be grown in the ground in warm climates or in large containers in warm or cool climates. Even gardeners in cold winter areas can enjoy these evergreen trees if they have a sunny space in which to winter them over indoors.
- Depending on the species of lemon or lime, **pollination by insects may be required for fruit to develop.** Some species can self-pollinate, while others require bees, wasps, butterflies, moths and other insects to move the pollen grains between flowers. Then the flower petals will wilt, while the female flower part (ovary, in the middle) will begin to develop into the lemon, or lime, fruit.

4. What Season do we pick Lemons and Limes?

- **Lemons and limes cannot grow in South Dakota outside.**

- In the tropical and subtropical areas, **both lemons and limes are available throughout the year**. Lemons are in the peak of their season around May, June and August while limes are at their peak from May through October.

5. Reasons to Eat Lemons and Limes

- Although lemons and limes may not be what you would choose for an afternoon snack, they are the powerhouses to bring out the flavor of other foods.
- Lemons and limes contain:
 - **Vitamin C**
 - **Antioxidants**
 - **Fiber**
 - **Iron (for limes)**
- Lemons are very low in Saturated Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium. It is also a good source of Folate and Potassium, and a very good source of Vitamin C.
- Limes are very low in Saturated Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium. It is also a good source of Calcium, Iron and Copper, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber and Vitamin C.
- Remember it is **important to eat a rainbow of food every day**, and lemon juice and lime juice bring out the flavors when you spritz them on your other fruits and vegetables.

6. How do you pick a good Lemons and Limes?

- One trick to finding a good lemon is to find one that is thin-skinned since those with thicker peels will have less flesh and therefore be less juicy. Therefore, choose lemons that are heavy for their size and that feature peels that have a finely grained texture.
- Lemons should be fully yellow in color as those that have green tinges will be more acidic due to the fact that they have not fully ripened.
- Choose limes that are firm and heavy for their size, free of decay and mold. They should have a glossy skin that is deep green in color; although limes turn more yellow as they ripen, they are at the height of their lively, tart flavor when they are green in color.
- Lemons and limes will **stay fresh kept at room temperature, for about one week**. You **can store them in the refrigerator crisper where they will keep for about 2-3 weeks**.

Fun Facts:

- Francis Bacon wrote about the value of citrus fruits as a remedy of “the sickness taken at sea.” (Known today as scurvy, which is a lack of vitamin C.) In 1867 The Shipping Act instructed all registered ships must carry supplies of lime or lemon juice. This act remains in force today.
- In 1767 Dr Macbride suggested that fresh lime juice should be mixed with bicarbonate of soda – this is the world’s first fizzy drink.

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