

The Sour Truth about Lemons

We're an oval to oblong citrus fruit, about 70-90mm by 60-70mm, with a small point at each end. Our skin or rind is more or less rough, thick and dotted with oil glands and our flesh is very juicy and sour. Our flesh is divided into segments by whitish membranes which radiate out from the center like the spokes of a wheel. Our seeds lie in our center. We're a member of the citrus family and related to oranges, mandarins and grapefruit. Our parent tree is an evergreen and grows up to 2.5 meters. Like other citrus trees, it has a dense and rounded shape, with glossy, smooth, dark green leaves.

Did you know?

- One of us can provide 50% of a day's requirements of vitamin C
- Lemon juice keeps cut pears, apples, bananas and avocados from turning brown
- The English word for us is thought to be derived from the Hindi word lemoen.

Eating Lemons:

- Like all citrus fruit, we're an excellent source of vitamin C. 100ml of our juice has 48mg of vitamin C - enough for one day. Mixed with honey, our juice is often used to soothe a sore throat.
- We're rich in pectin, a type of soluble fiber. Pectin is used for setting jams but it is also a type of dietary fiber. Some studies have shown that soluble dietary fiber can help lower blood cholesterol levels.
- If you eat one of us, it's important to rinse your mouth with water afterwards, as our high acidity level can erode tooth enamel. Don't brush your teeth immediately after eating us as the toothbrush can etch the acid into tooth enamel.
- Most people do not eat enough lemon for the kilojoules to count, but for those who do, 100g has 115kJ.

Fun Random Facts:

1. Lemon trees bloom and produce fruit year-round. Each tree can produce between 500 and 600 pounds of lemons in a year.
2. Next time you have a sore throat, reach for a lemon! Add the juice of one lemon to an equal amount of hot water for an anti-bacterial gargle.
3. Food historians say lemons have been in cultivation around the Mediterranean from as early as the first century A.D.
4. High in vitamin C, lemons 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 juice a day.
5. The demand for lemons and their scurvy-preventing properties hit a peak during the California Gold Rush of 1849. Miners were willing to pay huge sums for a single lemon. As a result, lemon trees were planted in abundance throughout California.
6. During the European Renaissance, fashionable ladies used lemon juice as a way to redden their lips.
7. California and Arizona produce 95% of the entire U.S. lemon crop.

