



Concentrate on Lemons

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A quick glance out the window to the backyard reveals the fruit laden branches of the neighbor's lemon tree draping over the fence, ready to be picked. The bright yellow fruit contrasts very prettily with the brilliant green of the leaves, both hiding the dangerous thorns that seem more like spikes when encountered with a bare arm. Many citrus fruits ripen in the winter, and these lemons glow like sunshine on the foggy winter day.

A great way to preserve that liquid sunshine is to pair it with strawberries to make a fruit juice concentrate that keeps the tart-sweet taste ready for any day, winter or summer. While strawberries and lemons traditionally ripen at different times of the year, modern transportation methods bring these two together for a wonderful pairing. To reconstitute the mixture below, simply mix one part concentrate to one part water. For even more zing, try mixing the concentrate one-to-one with sparkling water or ginger ale.

Be sure to wash all fruit very well before using, and choose only good, ripe fruit. Wash the strawberries under plenty of cool, running water and avoid bruising. And yes, the lemons need to be washed. Contaminants on the skin of the fruit, such as bird droppings, can be introduced into the fruit when cut with a knife. Avoid placing clean fruit on dirty surfaces.

The recipe below combines lemons and strawberries into delicious concentrate.

Strawberry Lemonade Concentrate (Yield: About 7 pint jars)

6 cups hulled strawberries
4 cups freshly squeezed lemon juice
6 cups sugar

Use a blender or a food processor and purée the strawberries until smooth and put in a large pot. Add lemon juice and sugar and stir to combine. Heat to 190° F., using medium-high heat. Stir occasionally and do not boil. Remove from heat and skim off any foam.

Ladle into hot jars, leave ¼-inch headspace, clean rim, place lids and screw bands.

Place jars in prepared canner, with jars completely under water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to maintain gentle boil and process for 15 minutes adjusting for altitude. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Allow jars to sit in canner for 5 minutes before removing. Set jars on rack or towel out of drafts and allow to cool. Remove screw band, label and store. Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving



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