



Sally's Galley

By Sally Oulton*

Lemon & Limes!

'Limey!' yelled one sailor to another.

Have you ever stopped to think what this old nautical term meant, and what it meant in terms of survival for sailors at sea?

I have discovered many reasons for the name. The most obvious one arrived from many centuries ago when it often took several months or even several years to get from A to B. As a result, sailors often died at sea from the terrible disease scurvy because there was a lack of vitamin C in their diet

In the late 1700's, surgeons of the British Navy discovered that citrus fruit such as limes and lemons carried the essential Vitamin C which prevents scurvy. It is thought limes were used over lemons due to limes being more readily available from Britain's own Caribbean colonies, although limes were thought not to be as effective as lemons in the prevention of scurvy.

By feeding their crew limes instead of lemons, the French thought the British were more concerned with profit than the health of their seamen. They called the British 'Limeys' as a mild insult, implying they were cheapskates, or mostly concerned with profit. 'Limey' later became the name given to newly arrived English immigrants in former British colonies such as America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. It later extended to become a slang term for all British.

The British also discovered that by carrying enough rum on board to provide a nip or two a day to sailors, not only perhaps helped fight off colds but rather simply kept the sailors happy.

Today, lemons and limes are not

Right: Sally is spot-on on when she asks "Could we imagine eating fish or crustaceans (like these fresh prawns) without a slice of lemon?" And of course, we couldn't! Below: They are also indispensable when producing the odd Margarita or two, or three, or four . . .







only included into the rations of Navy ships but in our everyday diet.

I like to stock them to bring out the flavour in seafood, but more importantly as an essential ingredient for our sunset margaritas while on anchor! And instead of a nip of rum to help fight off colds as sailors once did, you will most likely find yourself the following morning downing a fizzy berroca, the essential Vitamin B to help cure a hangover from too many of those margaritas consumed the night before!

But on a more serious note, imagine crumbed fish without a wedge of lemon or lime. Did I hear you gasp? Or a seafood platter served without a display of wedges of lemons and limes. What if you're at sea and have just caught a beautiful, fresh mackerel, picture not being able to marinate it with the juice of either a lemon or lime. It would be a disaster!

Lemon and limes are wonderful to bring out the flavours of seafood. During summer days, bright and sunny lemons are what we reach for. They are wonderful squeezed over a freshly cooked fillet of fish. They are also wonderful combined with a good quality olive oil and drizzled over a fresh salad or steamed vegetables to accompany your fish.

The citrus acid flavour acts as a balance to the oily nature of rich fish. For milder flavour fish, the clean freshness of lemon enlivens the fish's own taste. The wonderful thing about lemon and limes is that its flavour rarely overpowers the foods they are served with. Instead, they accentuate other foods with a very lovely, distinctive flavour all their own without the need to use salt.

So what can we do with lemon and limes? Listed below are some simple and easy ideas that you can apply to your catch and dishes:

- Sliced the lemon thinly and place inside the cavity, underneath and around fish before cooking to add flavour. Baking the fish will soften the slices and can be eaten along with the fish.
- Squeeze a couple of lemons and mixed with chopped parsley, drizzle over your cooked fillet of fish and then pour over some melted clarified butter. It will foam as it mixes with the lemon juice. Serve straight away.

- Cut lemon into wedges to place on a platter of seafood. When you cut the wedges, cut away the pith and the seeds will fall out. See photo.

- Not only does the juice from lemons and limes add flavour but also the citric acid in the fruit reacts with the seafood flesh to 'cook' it. The citric acid causes the proteins in the seafood to pickle or cook without heat, and enable you to eat it fresh a couple of hours straight after you caught it. The flesh doesn't technically cook, as no heat is used, but the colour turns from translucent to opaque and the texture firms up, much like cooked seafood does. In Tahiti, the Caribbean and Latin American seafood salads called 'Ceviches' are popular. They combine chunks of very raw fish with citrus juice, and often onions, tomatoes and herbs and marinate for up to three hours. Try it. They taste delicious.

- Lemon juice squeezed over avocados and fresh fruit such as sliced apples prevents discoloration.

Lemons are also useful to have on board your boat. They are extremely versatile and I have listed below a few areas where lemons can come in handy.

- Lemons are great for getting rid of lingering smells especially the smell of fish. Rub your hands with lemon juice and it will neutralise the smell and leave your hands smelling fresh.

- The same also applies to wooden chopping boards. Rub lemon juice into the board and leave overnight and then rinse. Wooden chopping boards appear to have anti-bacterial properties anyway but the lemon will help kill off any remaining germs and neutralise odours.

- Store half a lemon in your fridge

Sally's Traditions & Superstitions

Did you know . .

A common fishing superstition: If you count the number of fish you have caught, you will catch no more that day.

So don't count your catch until you're done!

****Editor's Note:** 37 yr old Sally Oulton was born in Perth, did a stint in NZ for five years, before settling in Dubbo, NSW where she grew up with her family. Leaving Oz in 1994, she travelled to Europe, did the secretarial thing for three years - and then changed course to study cooking in 1997. After her first cooking assignment (in the '97 Admiral's Cup) she spent the next ten years at sea - all over the world - in an extraordinary career that has so far embraced 60,000 miles at sea in everything from crack ocean racing yachts in Europe and South America, 'white yachts' in the Med, Caribbean and the Whitsundays - to Oz game boats off the Ribbons. Now back home, with her partner and a 19' Haines, they plan to explore the GBF via trailerboat.*

and it will help control and eliminate unpleasant smells.

All points above apply to limes as well.

Here are some quick tips for when choosing lemons and limes:

- When shopping, choose smooth-skinned lemons that feel heavy for their size
- The fruit will keep for up to a week at room temperature or two to three weeks in the fridge.
- While out on the water store them in the refrigerator or esky out of the sun.
- One medium lemon equals approximately 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and 1 lime equals approximately 1 tablespoon of limejuice.
- If you will be using both the lemon zest and juice, remove the zest before cutting and juicing the lemon.
- Remember to choose limes with a glossy skin that is deep green in colour and are at the height of their lively, tart flavour. As they ripen they turn more yellow, and brown spots will appear. If the limes have turned mostly brownish in colour they are too far-gone and will probably have an undesirable mouldy taste.

Fresh Oysters with Avocado, Tomato and Lime

To begin with, loosen the oysters on the shell so that you can lift them to your mouth and let them slide in. If you want a little kick, add a dash of vodka or Tabasco sauce.

- 2 dozen oysters, freshly opened
- 1 avocado
- Juice of 2 limes or lemons
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon snipped chives

Arrange oysters on the plate. Peel avocado and dice into small pieces and squirt a good lashing of lemon or

limejuice.

Cut tomatoes in half, gently squeeze out the seeds or scoop out with teaspoon, and dice up. Combine with avocado and chives, remaining juice and spoon over oysters.

Bon Appétit!



Sally's Sunset Margarita!

There are only three ingredients for a traditional margarita. It is simple - Tequila, orange liqueur, and limejuice. The best ratio is 3:2:1. Shake and strain that into a glass with or without ice. The sweet orange liqueur should be all the sweetness a true Margarita needs:

- 3 parts tequila
- 2 parts Cointreau or triple sec
- 1 part lime or lemon juice

Rub glass rim with a slice of lime or lemon and then dip in fine salt or alternately sugar, if you want it sweet. Place all ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake 30 seconds and then carefully pour into the glass (taking care not to dislodge any salt coated on the inside of the glass).

Cheers!

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