

PENNY SAVER NEWS

FAX: 932-5261

May 25, 2007

BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776

e-mail:makeith@ifas.ufl.edu

When Life Gives You Lemons...

We all know that saying “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” That is a good idea, specially since we’re in Older Americans Month. We might not be aging as gracefully as we hoped. Allowing the worries to get us down and our stress levels up is not healthy. Go get some exercise to take your mind off your worries! Or lift some weight (cans of peaches are handy) while you watch TV commercials! Munch on an apple instead of a candy bar. Those are all better lemonade than making a sour face over a problem.

Sometimes the problem can be as simple as not having the right ingredients on hand for a recipe. Maybe we have lemons and we need limes. Or we have lemons and need lemon juice. Recently I was asked how much regular lemon juice was needed for a pie when the recipe called for “juice of 5 Key limes.” Here are some comparisons for making those substitutions.

Let’s start with lemons and limes. Of course their flavor is not the same, but they are both acidic enough to substitute one for another in a recipe without ruining it. Key limes have a distinctly different flavor. Calamondins are a tiny, sour orange and are also tart enough to work successfully in many recipes that call for lemon or lime juice. Meyer lemons are larger, rounder and milder than the usual lemons.

Each medium sized common lemon will usually give you about 3 tablespoons of juice. Or, it will take about 6 lemons to make a cup of juice. If you freeze the fruit first then thaw it, or roll it on the counter while you press on it with the heel of your hand,

you'll probably get a little more juice than usual. A Meyer lemon will also give more juice. A medium lemon makes about 1 tablespoon of grated lemon peel or 2 teaspoons of zest.

The difference between citrus peel and zest is that the peel has more of the white skin, while the zest only uses the colored green, yellow or orange part. Most of the citrus flavor is in the zest. The white part is more bitter. Some recipes say to use the peel because the bitterness helps to balance the flavor.

Persian limes, the standard green ones, give 1½ to 2 tablespoons of juice, about half that of a lemon. On the other hand, a Key lime will only make 1 to 2 teaspoons of juice. If your recipe calls for the juice of 2 lemons, you'd want to use 3 or 4 limes, or 6 to 9 Key limes to get the same amount of juice. A lime makes about a teaspoon of grated zest. Even though calamondins are as small as Key limes they make more juice. But they are softer and have such a thin skin it's very difficult to grate them.

Oranges vary a lot in size, but are all larger than lemons or limes. A medium sized orange usually makes about a third of a cup of juice, about 5 tablespoons. So you'll need 3 or maybe 4 oranges for a cup of freshly squeezed juice. A really big orange might give you half a cup of juice. Each medium orange usually gives 4 to 6 teaspoons of grated orange zest, or a quarter cup of orange peel.

Tangerines are usually eaten in pieces, but you can make tangerine juice. You'll need 5 or 6 tangerines for a cup of juice. Grapefruit are larger and vary a lot in size. On average a medium grapefruit makes from 2/3 to 1 cup of juice, and 5 to 6 tablespoons of grated peel. You might be able to grate more peel but then the bitterness would overwhelm the citrus flavor.

A final note on juices: You can certainly buy bottles of lemon or lime juice.

They're quick and easy. But the flavor won't be the same because some of the fine, flowery scent of fresh citrus is lost in the processing and packaging. And if you have a bottle of brown lemon or lime juice on the shelf, don't even bother. It has lost enough flavor that it's not worth using. Start fresh the next time you need it.

Here's a cool treat for a warm day. You could use half low calorie sweetener, but don't try to use all sweetener or the pie will be flat and rock hard. Hope you enjoy it!

Fresh Lime Pie

1 pint (2 cups) low fat cottage cheese	1 envelope unflavored gelatin
1 large Persian lime	1 cup sugar
½ cup hot water	1 graham cracker pie shell

Cut lime into pieces and discard about 3/4 of the skin. Remove seeds. Chop in blender until finely cut. Mix in gelatin and allow to stand for 5 minutes. Add hot water and pulse in blender until the gelatin is dissolved. Slowly add cottage cheese and sugar (or sugar and sweetener) until mixed and smooth. Pour into pie shell and chill until firm.

Garnish with maraschino cherries and a curl of lime peel. Serves 6 to 8.

Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.