

Preserved lemons & Sparkling Preserved Lemonade

We have recently been making a fresh batch of preserved lemons with added herbal flavours. They are an essential ingredient to Moroccan cuisine but add a savory umami flavour with a mellow citrus undertone to so many more dishes.

Preserved lemons are a luxury to buy but really easy to make.

Essentially fresh lemons are preserved in lots of salt with added herbs, which gives them a salty, slightly tart, pickled flavour, with all of the flesh, pith and peel softened and edible.

You will need a suitable sterilised jar with a wide screw lid (or a preserving jar with a seal) that will just hold the number of lemons you plan to preserve.

Cut each lemon nearly into quarters top to bottom to within 2cm of the base, leaving it attached at the bottom end. As you transfer each lemon into the jar stuff the centre with a tablespoon of salt. Push them in really tightly and seal up and leave initially for a week.

After this time open up the jar and press the lemons down hard to squeeze them together. The salt will have drawn out loads of juice, add sprigs of thyme and rosemary and a little more lemon juice to just cover the fruit if needed.

Top up the jar with 1cm of olive oil to make the lemons air tight and put the jar away in a cool dark place for at least 4 weeks.



Your preserved lemons can be added to all manner of dishes:

- Vinaigrette dressings for salad
- To pep up a lemon cake
- Add umami to a soup
- Stews and pasta sauces
- The ultra concentrated brine left over is great used sparingly in cocktails, dressings and sauces

For a refreshing treat make some Sparkling Preserved Lemonade:

- Mix together 4 tbsp finely chopped preserved lemons to 4 tbsp fresh lemon juice and 2 tbsp chopped mint.
- Divide the mixture between 4 glasses filled with ice and top up with tonic water.
- Garnish with a lemon slice, a curl of cucumber and a big sprig of mint.