

Lemonade Concentrate

SERVES Serves 4 (makes 2 cups lemonade concentrate or 4 cups lemonade)

TIME 20 minutes, plus 1½ hours cooling

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Simple lemonade—just juice, sugar, and water—is refreshing at first, but it can get a bit cloying before your glass is half-empty. For a more complex drink, we muddled the zest with sugar to incorporate some of its floral, spicy, and sweet flavors and steeped the mixture in hot water. A hefty amount of lemon juice provided plenty of acidity, and a small amount of salt balanced any excess bitterness, leaving our lemonade with just a hint of bitterness to lend the drink a bit of sophistication. Because our recipe makes a concentrate, you can dilute it with either still or sparkling water and make an entire pitcher or just one glass at a time. And lemonade is just the beginning: This concentrate can also be incorporated into cocktails, combined with iced tea for an Arnold Palmer, or mixed with beer for a shandy.



INGREDIENTS

- ☐ **5** lemons, divided
- ☐ $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5¼ ounces) sugar
- ☐ $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon table salt
- ☐ **1** cup hot water

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- *** It's a good idea to have five lemons on hand, but you may not need all of them. Use a vegetable peeler, not a paring knife, to remove the zest.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Select 2 lemons with fewest blemishes and scrub well. Rinse and dry thoroughly. Using vegetable peeler, remove zest of washed lemons in strips. Transfer zest to bowl and add sugar and salt. Toss to combine. Using potato masher, mash zest, sugar, and salt vigorously until mixture is damp, clumpy, and very fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add hot water and stir until sugar is dissolved, about 1 minute. Set aside until cool, about 30 minutes. While mixture cools, juice enough lemons to yield $\frac{3}{4}$ cup juice.

2 Stir juice into zest mixture until combined. Strain through fine-mesh strainer set over 2-cup liquid measuring cup; discard zest. Refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour. (If not using concentrate right away, transfer to airtight container and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.)

TO MAKE LEMONADE: For single serving, pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup concentrate over ice and stir gently to combine; if necessary, dilute with additional water to taste. For 4 servings, fill pitcher with ice, add 2 cups cold water and all of concentrate, and stir to combine; if necessary, dilute with additional water to taste. For sparkling lemonade, substitute plain seltzer for cold water.