

Citrus Fruits With Lime Syrup

Nico Ladenis was, for many years, one of Britain's most controversial chefs. In particular he was famous for evicting diners from his restaurant. He did, however, carry a great deal of respect, and his restaurant, Chez Nico came to be highly acclaimed. His cooking is based on French classical cooking, with influences from his Greek mother, and a childhood spent in tropical Africa among plantings of mangos, bananas, pineapples, passionfruit and limes.

Nico's book, "My Gastronomy", contains numerous innovative recipes. Lime syrup is one of them. About it he wrote:

"This is one of my stock sauces, and comes straight out of my head. I have made it since the very start of my cooking career and, to this day, it forms the flavouring for the fruit arrangements which we serve either by themselves, or to accompany our sorbets. The aroma is sensational and the colour a very beautiful, vivid transparent lime green... Sprinkle over fruit. It is delicious."

The syrup can be made well ahead of time, and refrigerates well for a week or two. Use it for sophisticated desserts. Here we suggest serving it over citrus fruit, but it is delicious with a wide range of other fruits, including tamarillo and kiwi fruit, and all sorts of tropical fruits (try it over mango, pineapple and custard apple). We also give a recipe for a second syrup suitable for fruit salads.

Ingredients for lime syrup

- 8 medium limes (with predominantly green skin)
- 300 ml water
- 200 g sugar

Method for lime syrup

Using a vegetable peeler, or sharp paring knife, remove the zest from the limes. Ensure this is quite thin, and with as little white pith as possible, to avoid bitterness. Ensure about 10 to 20 zests are intact, and then cut these into long thin strips – the strips will be used to garnish. Put all the zest and strips, together with the water and sugar into a saucepan. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes.

Take off the heat and leave for 1 hour to infuse. Juice three of the limes, strain, and add to the syrup. Strain through a fine strainer (or through muslin for a clearer syrup), and store in a glass container. Pick the thin strips of zest from the strainer and add back to the syrup. Refrigerate until needed. Use this syrup in sparing quantities over fruit. Enough for about 12 servings.

(Second syrup: To utilise the remaining five limes, take the leftover zests from the strainer and place back in the saucepan. Add 100 ml water and 100 grams sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer. Juice the remaining limes and strain the juice into the saucepan. Boil and adjust for more sugar. You may have to add quite a lot more sugar to bring the syrup to an acceptable level of sweetness. Strain this syrup. Discard all the zest. Pour the whole of this second syrup over a fruit salad, or over a bowl full of citrus segments, and refrigerate until needed. See below for a citrus fruit salad idea.)

Olive's Kitchen

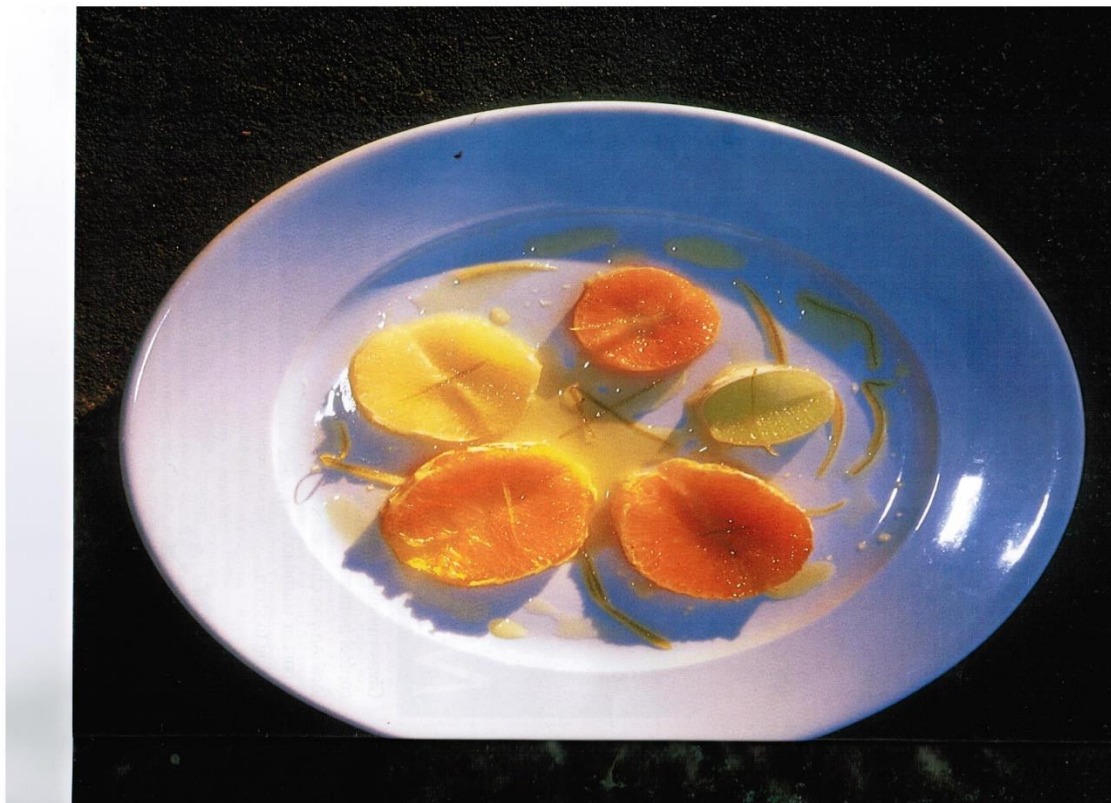
Carpaccio of citrus fruits with lime syrup

Here we use the first syrup with a carpaccio of citrus fruits – the fine dining option – with a plate for each guest. You can also make a bigger version using the second syrup.

Take what citrus fruits you can find - mandarin, orange, blood orange, small grapefruit and tangelo. One of each should suffice. Peel them and remove as much of the white pith as you can from the outside. Take segments of each. Then using a sharp knife, slice each segment in half starting from the thick outside and cutting towards the inside, stopping just before the membrane. Open up and place one or more segment of each type of fruit on the serving plate. Sprinkle with a tablespoon of the lime syrup, including some shreds of lime peel for garnish.

Serve immediately, as is or with lovely quality ice cream or double cream.

The following photo was taken some years ago. The next one, more recently. After that is a photo of large platter of segmented citrus fruit that would be perfect for the second syrup – make up the salad as shown and then pour the second syrup over.





Citrus fruit salad

Prepare a platter as shown in the photo, and pour over a quantity of the second lime syrup. Serve with ice cream, cream or both.

