



## How To Ferment Lemons, And How To Use Them.

Winter is the time of year when citrus is at its prime - and that means juicy and zesty lemons. Lemons are a wonderful bit of sunshine to add to winter menus and decorative centerpieces during the cold and less sunny months of the year.

Lemons have an important and beloved place in our home. They deck our counters in beautiful bowls, add to family recipes and help us naturally keep clean and healthy. Lemons just have that certain something that brightens everything up and I just love to ferment them. Lemons are super easy to ferment and I hope you will take the time to learn how you can ferment them too.

Fermented lemons are widely used in Middle Eastern and North African foods and are truly a hidden culinary gem. Once you have tried your first fermented lemon, you will know what I am talking about. One of the cool things about fermenting lemons is that you can literally eat the whole lemon. Most people are put off by the bitterness of the white portion of the lemon peel (called the pith), but, when fermented, that bitterness goes away - making the whole lemon a delight to eat!

### Fermented Lemons

8-10 lemons (preferable organic)

1/4-cup sea salt or Kosher salt (not table salt)  
1 gallon mason jar  
Mallet  
Time and faith

First, wash all lemons. Organic lemons are best because non-organic lemons are generally waxed, which can inhibit the fermentation process.

Cut 8 lemons into quarters, but don't cut them all the way through. You want them to open up, but not pull apart.

Next, pack the inside of each lemon with about 1 tablespoon of salt. Then place them into the jar.

Juice the remaining lemons and pour the juice over the lemons in the jar.

Take the mallet and pound the lemons a bit. This should release some juices.

Leave the Jar on the counter for two weeks and pound the lemons at least once per day. Two times is better. The Juices will grow and cover the lemons.

After the first two weeks you can move the lemons to cold storage. For us, that's in the garage. For those in warmer climates, that might be the fridge (but not the freezer).

Now you have the wonderful fermented lemons - so now what, right?

Here are a couple of delicious traditional dishes that call for fermented lemons. I encourage you to ferment your own lemons and make all of these recipes - because once you understand the flavor and the potential of these amazing treats, their uses become endless. Enjoy!

### Traditional Tabouli

2 cups bulgur  
2 cups very hot water  
1 cucumber, chopped  
2 small tomatoes, diced  
1 bunch green onions  
1/4 cup fresh finely chopped mint, to taste  
2 cups fresh finely chopped parsley

1 clove garlic, minced

Dressing:

1-2 fermented lemons minced

1-tablespoon juice from fermented lemons

3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon pepper

salt to taste

Soak the bulgur in the hot water until the water is absorbed, about 30 minutes. When it's ready, drain any excess water.

Meantime, prepare the vegetables for the salad and mix the dressing ingredients together. Set aside.

Combine all the ingredients into a bowl and toss.

Keep at room temperature until ready to serve. This allows the flavors to meld.

#### **Turmeric - Tahini Dressing:**

1/2-cup tahini

1/2 fermented lemon chopped

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1/2-teaspoon turmeric

A pinch of cayenne pepper

Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients into a small food processor and blend. If it is too thick, thin it with a little water.

#### **Classic Tangine Chicken With Fermented Lemons:**

1 whole chicken sectioned

1 onion diced

1 can of diced tomatoes or fresh is you have them

1 cup of chicken stock

8 small potatoes

3/4 cup of pitted green olives

1-teaspoon olive oil

1 handful of whole parsley

#### **Chermoula - aka marinade and sauce:**

1/2-teaspoon chili flakes

1 tablespoon minced parsley

2 cloves garlic minced

2 teaspoons fresh ginger grated

1 tablespoon minced cilantro

1-teaspoon ground coriander

2 teaspoon whole mustard seed

1-teaspoon turmeric

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 fermented lemon (seeds removed and chopped finely)

Salt and pepper to taste

Make the Chermoula by combining all the ingredients into a bowl, excluding the oil. Then, add in the oil to create a paste.

In a Tupperware (or something like it) arrange the chicken pieces. Smear the Chermoula evenly over the chicken and marinate over night.

Warm some oil and some Chermoula sauce in a Dutch oven. Add in the diced onions and cook until soft. Add in the tomato, potatoes, chicken and remainder of the Chermoula sauce. Pour in the chicken stock and bring all ingredients to a soft boil. Gently simmer for 30 - 45 minutes. If the chicken stock boils off too much, add a little more.

Remove the flesh from the fermented lemons and cut the skin into thin strips.

Add the lemon skins and the olives to Dutch oven. Cover and allow to cook another 30 minutes. Check on it occasionally to make sure there are enough liquids. Finally, turn the stove top off and allow the dish to sit for 15 minutes before serving.