

PRESERVED LEMONS-Here are two kinds of preserved lemons: one uses salt and aromatics to confit whole lemons and the other uses a combination of salt and sugar to cure slices of lemon. Unlike the preserved lemons, from which we take only the peel, the cured lemons are sliced before being cured and then we use whole slices, which have a sweetness from the absorbed sugar.

Both preparations can be used instead of lemon rind in many dishes. If oil is appropriate in a dish, the peel of the preserved lemon lends an interesting note. We use it in marinades, mixed with salt as a rub on lamb or chicken before roasting, or in a compound butter that melts over hot meat, fish or vegetables. The cured lemons can be added to vanilla ice cream for a salty lemon ice cream. We use them when sauteing bass or skate and as a garnish to Brined Pork Tenderloin, where they caramelize in the hot oil, adding a whole new layer of flavor to the dish.

{From ad hoc at home by Thomas Keller

PRESERVED WHOLE LEMON

1-1/2 c. Kosher salt

6 lemons (3-4 oz. Each), scrubbed

1 t. Black peppercorns

3 bay leaves

Juice of 2 lemons, or as needed

1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil

Pour 1/2 inch of salt into a 1-pint canning jar.

Cut each lemon lengthwise into quarters, stopping about 3/8 inch from the stem end so that the lemon wedges stay attached. Spread the lemons open.

Salt the inside of 1 lemon generously, then push the wedges together to "close" the lemon and place it in the jar, pressing it down slightly. Repeat with another lemon, and add 1/3 t. peppercorns, 1 bay leaf, and 1/3 of the remaining salt. Repeat with 2 more lemons. Add 1/3 t. peppercorns, 1 bay leaf, and half the remaining salt. Repeat with the last 2 lemons and the remaining peppercorns, bay leaf, and salt.

The lemons will have released some juice. Add enough additional juice to cover the lemons, pressing down slightly on them to compress them. Top with the olive oil and cover the jar.

Put the jar in a pantry or other cool, dark spot and let stand for at least 1 month, or for up to 6 months. Refrigerate the jar after opening and use the lemons within 1 month.

(Another recipe I have also used 1 T. red pepper flakes and a cinnamon stick)

CURED LEMONS

8 lemons (3-4 oz. Each) scrubbed

1-3/4 c. Plus 1 T. granulated sugar

1-1/2 c. Plus 1 T. Kosher salt

Cut 1/2 inch from one end of a lemon, leaving you with the nice, widest portion, and slice the lemon into 1/8 inch rounds, removing the seeds as you go and stopping 1/2 inch from the other end. Repeat with the remaining lemons.

Combine the sugar and salt in a large bowl.

Sprinkle just under 1/2 inch of the sugar mixture in the bottom of a storage container that is

about 6 inches square. Arrange a row of slightly overlapping lemon slices on top, and top with a layer of the sugar mixture that just covers the lemon slices completely. As you layer the lemons, the goal is to have enough of the sugar and salt mixture evenly distributed on the slices so that when it dissolves, all of the lemon slices will be covered with the liquid. (It is better to use too much

sugar and salt than too little, because any exposed areas of lemon can mold.). Continue the process, alternating the lemon slices and sugar mixture, and ending with a layer of the sugar mixture on top.

Put the lid on the container and wrap the container tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for a least 2 weeks, or for up to 1 month.

PRESERVED LEMON-from BOUCHON by Thomas Keller

This is a simple, quick technique for making preserved lemon, a terrific seasoning. It's a handy item to have in your pantry to mince and add to stocks, stews, or sauces for a bright citrusy component.

6 lemons, washed and dried

Kosher salt

Sugar

Extra virgin olive oil

Cut the ends off each lemon so that it can stand without tipping. Slice each lemon crosswise into paper-thin slices, keeping the slices together because the lemons will be re-formed. Remove any seeds. Re-form each lemon: Lay the bottom slice on a work surface and sprinkle with a light dusting of salt. Top with the next slice of lemon and a light dusting of sugar. Continue alternating the slices with layers of salt and sugar. When all the lemons, are re-formed, stand them upright in a snug fitting container. Place in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

Pour enough olive oil into the container to cover the lemons and return to the refrigerator for 3 days. Drain the oil and reserve for other uses. (The lemons can be refrigerated for up to 3 weeks; they can also be frozen for longer storage.)