



Roasted Lemons

A simple technique brings out rich sweetness and imparts caramelized complexity to the flavor of the lemon.

BY DIANA ANDREWS

ALL IT TAKES IS SOME TIME IN A HOT OVEN TO TRANSFORM AN ORDINARY LEMON INTO A RICH POWERHOUSE OF INTENSE FLAVOR. A dose of citrus can really wake up a dish, but when it's roasted, the results are tenfold. The heat brings out a lemon's juice and the essential oils in its skin, caramelizing and reducing them into a syrupy, charred sweetness that adds an intoxicating flavor to just about anything it touches.

The recipes here all start with the easy process of roasting lemons (see p. 63). Try the Roasted Lemon Shrimp Scampi with Linguine (p. 60) for an easy week-night meal. The syrupy juice coats the shrimp and pasta with an irresistible tangy sweetness. Roasted Lemon Chicken Thighs and Potatoes (p. 61) combines deep lemon flavor with a touch of honey, and if you're looking for something sweet, the Roasted Lemon Tart (p. 62) uses minced peel in the crust and juice in the filling for a double dose of roasted lemony goodness.

But don't stop here. Have some fun experimenting with the almost endless ways to use roasted lemons with chicken, fish, pork, salads, and vegetables, and even in drinks—a roasted lemonade, perhaps?

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY FELICIA PERRETTI

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Get the most from your lemons

- The most common lemons in markets today are Lisbons and Eurekas. I recommend Lisbon lemons for the recipes here because they have thin skins and the most juice. Lisbon lemons are recognizable by their smooth flesh and a blossom end that tapers to a point, with no tip on the opposite stem end. Eureka lemons have a thicker skin with a rougher, more textured surface and tapered points on both the stem and blossom ends.
- Wash and dry the lemons before roasting them.
- If you plan to use lemons promptly, store them in a cool, dry place on the counter. If you are storing for longer than a day, they'll stay fresher and juicier refrigerated in the crisper drawer.
- Be sure to cut the points off both ends of the lemon before halving and roasting. This will prevent the lemon from rolling around on the baking sheet and ensure maximum roasting of the lemon's surface.

roasted lemon shrimp scampi with linguine

Loaded with garlicky shrimp and a rich lemon flavor, this pasta dish comes together easily and will disappear quickly. Serve with extra grated cheese. Serves 4

- ¼ cup olive oil; more as needed
- 1 medium lemon, washed, ends trimmed, and halved crosswise (about 6½ oz.)
- ½ cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- ½ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 1 oz.)
- ½ tsp. granulated garlic; more to taste
- Kosher salt
- 10 oz. linguine
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 1½ lb. extra-jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per lb.), shelled and deveined
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- ½ cup finely chopped shallots
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced or grated
- 1 tsp. Calabrian pepper paste or other hot pepper paste; more to taste
- ¼ cup dry white wine

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 450°F.

Lightly brush a small foil-lined rimmed baking sheet with oil. Arrange the lemon halves flesh side up close together in the center of the prepared pan. Brush the tops lightly with oil. Roast until the lemon is puffy and just beginning to lightly brown on the edges, and the foil under the lemon turns dark brown and syrupy, 25 to 27 minutes.

Turn the lemon halves over with tongs and rub the flesh over the dark spots on the foil to loosen the caramelized bits (the lemon flesh will turn brown). Squeeze the juice and pulp from the lemon into a small bowl, discard the seeds, and set aside. Mince the peel of one lemon half, and transfer to a medium bowl. Add the parsley, cheese, granulated garlic, and ½ tsp. salt. Set aside.

Add the remaining lemon half to a large pot of well-salted water. Bring the water to a boil, add the pasta, and cook until 1 minute before al dente, according to package directions. Remove and discard the lemon. Reserve 1 cup

of the pasta water. Add the peas and cook for 1 minute. Drain the linguine and peas, and return to the pot.

Meanwhile, pat the shrimp dry with paper towels. Season with ¼ tsp. salt. In a large, heavy skillet, heat ¼ cup of the oil and the butter over medium heat until the butter melts. Add the shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until translucent, about 1 minute. Add the garlic and pepper paste, and cook, stirring frequently, until just fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the wine, stirring frequently until just fragrant and simmering, about 2½ minutes. Add the shrimp and toss occasionally until they just begin to turn opaque, 2 to 2½ minutes.

Pour the ingredients from the skillet into the pasta pot along with the reserved lemon juice, tossing with some of the reserved pasta water to loosen the sauce, if you like.

Season to taste with more salt, granulated garlic, and pepper paste. Transfer the mixture to a serving bowl, top with the reserved parsley mixture, and serve immediately.



roasted lemon chicken thighs and potatoes

Short on ingredients but long on flavor, this one-pan meal needs only a side salad to be complete. **Serves 4**

- ¼ cup olive oil; more as needed**
- 3 medium lemons, washed, ends trimmed, and halved crosswise (about 1 lb.)**
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tsp. granulated garlic**
- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 2 lb.)**
- 4 to 5 medium Yukon Gold or red-skin potatoes, each cut into 6 wedges (about 2 lb.)**
- 2 Tbs. honey**
- 2 tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano, plus sprigs for garnish**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 450°F.

Lightly brush a large foil-lined rimmed baking sheet with oil. Arrange the lemon halves close together flesh side up in the center of the prepared pan. Brush the tops with 2 tsp. of the oil. Roast until just beginning to brown on the edges and the foil under the lemons turns dark brown and syrupy, 25 to 27 minutes.

Turn the lemon halves over with tongs, and rub the flesh over the dark spots on the foil to loosen the caramelized bits (the lemon flesh will turn brown). Transfer to a rimmed plate with any accumulated juices from the pan, and cool completely. Reserve the baking sheet.

Lower the oven temperature to 425°F. When the lemons are cool, squeeze 4 halves (including the pulp) into a large bowl. Add the accumulated juices from the plate (the juice will be thick and syrupy). Whisk in 1½ tsp. salt, 1½ tsp. granulated garlic, 1 tsp. oil, and ¼ tsp. pepper. Add the chicken to the bowl, and toss to coat. Let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, tossing occasionally. Put the chicken on the reserved baking sheet in a single layer skin side up. Rub any remaining marinade from the bowl evenly over the chicken.

Add the potatoes to the same bowl with the remaining 3 Tbs. oil, 1½ tsp. granulated garlic, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Toss to coat. Spread the potatoes in a single layer on the pan with the chicken.



Roast until an instant-read thermometer registers 165°F in the thickest part of the thighs, and the potatoes are light golden-brown, tossing the potatoes halfway through cooking time, about 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, squeeze the remaining 2 lemon halves, including the pulp, into a small bowl (the juice will be thick and syrupy). Mince the peel of 1 of the remaining lemon halves (discard the other), and add to the

bowl along with the honey and oregano, mixing well to combine. Brush the lemon-honey glaze evenly onto the chicken thighs. Return to the oven for 5 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a plate, and tent with foil.

Turn the broiler to high, and broil until the potatoes are golden, turning the pan halfway through broiling time, 2 to 3 minutes more. Arrange the chicken and potatoes on a large platter, garnish with oregano sprigs, and serve.



roasted lemon tart

The roasted lemon adds intense color and mellow, smooth flavor to the curd in this dessert.

Serves 8 to 10

FOR THE DOUGH

- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 4 medium lemons, washed, ends trimmed, and halved crosswise (about 1½ lb.)
- 6¾ oz. (1½ cups) all-purpose flour; more for dusting
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 2½ Tbs. granulated sugar
- 4 oz. (8 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 2 Tbs. cold vegetable shortening, cut into small pieces
- 3 Tbs. ice water; more as needed
- Nonstick cooking spray

FOR THE LEMON CURD

- 8 large egg yolks
- ½ cup strained roasted lemon juice
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 4 oz. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 Tbs. confectioners' sugar
- Caramelized lemon slices, for garnish (see p. 88)

MAKE THE DOUGH

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 450°F. Brush a large foil-lined rimmed baking sheet with some of the oil. Put the lemon halves close together flesh side up in the center of the prepared sheet. Brush the cut tops with the remaining oil. Roast until the lemons are puffy, just beginning to lightly brown on the edges, and the foil under the lemons turns dark brown and syrupy, 25 to 27 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool. When the lemons are cool, squeeze them through a fine-mesh strainer over a measuring cup to yield ½ cup juice (if you have less than ½ cup juice, put the lemon halves in a bit of warm water, squeezing to release more juice, and top off as needed). Set aside. Mince half of a lemon peel to measure 2 packed Tbs., and set aside. Discard the rest of the lemons.

Combine the flour, salt, lemon peel, and sugar in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse to combine, about 10 times. Add the butter and shortening, and pulse until the fat is no bigger than peas, 20 to 22 times.

While pulsing, add 3 Tbs. of the water; add more 1 Tbs. at a time until the mixture starts to form large clumps but does not ball up around the blade. The dough should hold together when you squeeze it. Dump the dough onto a

piece of plastic wrap on a work surface, gently knead into a ball, then shape into a disk about 7 inches in diameter. Wrap the dough tightly in the plastic, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

Roll the chilled dough between lightly floured sheets of parchment into a circle approximately 13 inches in diameter and about ¼ inch thick. Transfer the dough to a 9½-inch tart pan with a removable bottom. Gently fit the dough into the pan without stretching it. Using lightly floured fingertips, gently press the dough into the corners and sides of the tart pan. Run a rolling pin over the top to trim excess dough. Refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes.

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 375°F. Put the tart shell on a large rimmed baking sheet. Lightly spray a piece of parchment with cooking spray. Line the crust with the parchment cooking-spray side down on the dough, fill with dry beans or pie weights, and bake until the edges are light golden-brown, about 20 minutes.

Carefully remove the parchment and pie weights. Return the tart shell to the oven, and continue to bake until the shell is lightly browned, 8 to 9 minutes more. Remove from the oven. If the pastry has puffed up, gently pierce with a fork until it deflates. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

MAKE THE FILLING

Combine the yolks, lemon juice, sugar, vanilla, and salt into a medium saucepan over medium heat, and cook, whisking continuously, until the mixture is thick and coats the back of a spoon, about 5 minutes. Gradually add the butter, whisking to incorporate. Remove from the heat, and strain into a bowl, taking care to scrape the curd from the bottom of the strainer. Pour the curd into the cooled crust.

Put a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the curd to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until completely cold and no longer jiggly, at least 5 hours or up to overnight.

Combine the cream and confectioners' sugar in a medium bowl. With an electric hand mixer, whip the cream to stiff peaks. Arrange the caramelized lemon slices on top of the tart, and serve with the whipped cream on the side.



Roasting lemons step-by-step



Cut the ends off the lemons, and then cut the lemons in half crosswise.



Arrange the lemons flesh side up on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet that has been lightly brushed with oil.



Lightly brush the cut sides of the lemons with oil, and roast until the edges turn light brown.



Remove the lemons from the oven. Turn and rub the flesh over the syrup on the pan to incorporate into the lemon (skip this step for the Roasted Lemon Tart).