Homemade Limoncello

By Joanne Weir

The ingredients for limoncello are simple and few, and making a batch doesn’t require much work, but you do need patience; limoncello must steep for 80 days.

Yields 3 quarts (12 cups)

15 thick-skinned lemons
2 750-ml bottles 100-proof vodka
4 cups sugar
5 cups water

Wash the lemons well with a vegetable brush and hot water; pat dry. Using a vegetable peeler, remove the peel from the lemon in long, wide strips. Scrape away any of the bitter white pith from the lemon peel with a paring knife.

Combine the lemon peels and one of the bottles of vodka in a large (at least 4 quarts) glass jar with a lid. Cover the jar and store it at room temperature in a dark cabinet or cupboard for 40 days. As the vodka sits, it will slowly take on the bright yellow color of the lemon zest.

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar with 5 cups of water. Bring to a boil over high heat and let the syrup boil for 5 minutes. Let the syrup cool, then add it to the limoncello mixture, along with the remaining bottle of vodka. Cover the jar and return it to the cupboard for another 40 days.

Strain the limoncello into bottles and discard the lemon zest.

From Fine Cooking 19, pp. 67
March 3, 1997


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Foodie for Two/August 2012
Food Blog: www.foodiefortwo.com

- Save the lemon juice for later use; after peeling, juice the lemons, pour juice into ice cube tray, freeze and store cubes in freezer bag or container.
  Yields about 12 ice cubes; one regular ice cube = 2 tablespoons

- Need some ideas for using fresh lemon juice ice cubes? Add to water pitcher for instant flavor, add to sauces, or defrost and use when baking or making vinaigrettes.