

Lime (fruit)

For other uses, see [Lime \(disambiguation\)](#).

A **lime** (from French *lime*, from Arabic *līma*, from Persian *līmū*, “lemon”)^[1] is a hybrid citrus fruit, which is typically round, lime green, 3–6 centimetres (1.2–2.4 in) in diameter, and containing acidic juice vesicles.^[2] There are several species of citrus trees whose fruits are called limes, including the Key lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*), Persian lime, kaffir lime, and desert lime. Limes are an excellent source of vitamin C, and are often used to accent the flavours of foods and beverages. They are grown year-round.^[3] Plants with fruit called “limes” have diverse genetic origins; limes do not form a monophyletic group.



Lime and blossom



Kaffir lime fruit

1 Plants known as “lime”

- Australian limes (former *Microcitrus* and *Eremocitrus*)
 - Australian desert lime (*Citrus glauca*)
 - Australian finger lime (*Citrus australasica*)
 - Australian round lime (*Citrus australis*)
 - Blood lime (red finger lime x (sweet orange x mandarin))
- Kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*); also called a kieffer lime, *makrut*, or *magrood*; a papeda relative.
- Key lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*=*Citrus micrantha* x *Citrus medica*^{[4][5][6]}); also called Mexican, West Indian, or bartender’s lime.
- Musk lime (*Citrofortunella mitis*), a kumquat hybrid
- Persian lime (*Citrus x latifolia*), also called Tahiti or Bearss lime. Developed in California, this is the commonplace lime.^[7]
- Rangpur lime (Mandarin lime, lemandarin^[8]), a mandarin orange – rough lemon^[4] hybrid
- Spanish lime (*Melicoccus bijugatus*); also called *mamoncillo*, *mamón*, *ginep*, *quenepa*, or *limoncillo*; not a citrus.
- Sweet lime etc. (*Citrus limetta* etc.); assorted citrus hybrids) including varieties called sweet lemon, sweet limetta or Mediterranean sweet lemon, lumia, Indian or Palestinian sweet lime.
- Wild lime (*Adelia ricinella*); not a citrus.
- Wild lime (*Zanthoxylum fagara*); not a citrus.
- Limequat (lime x kumquat)

The tree species known in Britain as lime trees (*Tilia* sp.), called *linden* in other dialects of English, are broadleaf temperate plants, unrelated to the citrus fruits.

2 History

Although the precise origin is uncertain, limes are believed to have first grown in Indonesia or Southeast Asia,

then were transported to the **Mediterranean region** and **northern Africa** around 1000.^[2]

To prevent scurvy during the 19th century, **British sailors** were issued a daily allowance of citrus, such as **lemon**, and later switched to lime.^[9] The use of citrus was initially a closely guarded **military secret**, as scurvy was a common scourge of various national navies, and the ability to remain at sea for lengthy periods without contracting the disorder was a huge benefit for the military. The British sailor thus acquired the nickname, "**Limey**" because of their usage of limes.^[10]

3 Production

In 2013, the total world production of lemons and limes was 15.42 million tonnes, with India leading production of 2.52 million tonnes (table).

4 Uses



Zesting a lime

Limes have higher contents of sugars and acids than do lemons.^[2]

Lime juice may be squeezed from fresh limes, or purchased in bottles in both unsweetened and sweetened varieties. Lime juice is used to make **limeade**, and as an ingredient (typically as **sour mix**) in many **cocktails**.

Lime pickles are an integral part of Indian cuisine. **South Indian cuisine** is heavily based on lime; having either **lemon pickle** or **lime pickle** is considered an essential of **Onam Sadhya**.

In cooking, lime is valued both for the acidity of its juice and the floral aroma of its **zest**. It is a common ingredient in authentic **Mexican**, **Vietnamese** and **Thai** dishes. It is also used for its pickling properties in **ceviche**. Some **guacamole** recipes call for lime juice.

The use of dried limes (called **black lime** or *loomi*) as a flavouring is typical of **Persian cuisine** and **Iraqi cuisine**, as well as in Gulf-style *baharat* (a spice mixture that is

also called *kabsa* or *kebsa*).

Lime is an ingredient of many cuisines from **India**, and many varieties of pickles are made, e.g. **sweetened lime pickle**, **salted pickle**, and **lime chutney**.

Key lime gives the character flavoring to the American dessert known as **Key lime pie**. In **Australia**, **desert lime** is used for making **marmalade**.

Lime is an ingredient in several **highball cocktails**, often based on **gin**, such as **gin and tonic**, the **gimlet** and the **Rickey**. Freshly squeezed lime juice is also considered a key ingredient in **margaritas**, although sometimes **lemon juice** is substituted.

Lime extracts and **lime essential oils** are frequently used in **perfumes**, **cleaning products**, and **aromatherapy**.

5 Nutrition and research

Raw limes are 88% water, 10% carbohydrates and less than 1% each of fat and protein (table). Only **vitamin C** content at 35% of the **Daily Value (DV)** per 100 g serving is significant for nutrition, with other nutrients present in low DV amounts (table).

5.1 Phytochemicals

Lime flesh and peel contain diverse phytochemicals, including **polyphenols** and **terpenes**,^[12] many of which are under **basic research** for their potential properties in humans.^[13]

5.2 Dermatitis

When human skin is exposed to **ultraviolet light** after contact with **lime peel** or juice, a reaction known as **phytophotodermatitis** can occur, which can cause darkening of the skin, swelling or blistering. Bartenders handling limes and other citrus fruits when preparing cocktails may develop **phytophotodermatitis** due to the high concentration of **furocoumarins** and other **phototoxic coumarins** in limes.^[14] The main coumarin in limes is **limettin** which has manifold higher content in peels than in pulp.^{[15][16]} **Persian limes** have a higher content of coumarins and potentially greater phototoxicity than do **Key limes**.^[15]

6 See also

- Lime production in Mexico
- List of citrus fruits
- List of lime cultivars



Lime (Citrus latifolia) essential oil

- List of culinary fruits varieties
- Pickled lime

7 References

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