17th Century Lemonade

The earliest written evidence of lemonade was discovered from the Egyptian Mediterranean coast. A drink made with lemons, dates, and honey was consumed in the 13th and 14th centuries in Egypt, including a lemon juice drink with sugar, known as qatarmizat. It was used both medicinally and as a refreshing drink.

Lemonade, as we know it today, began to take shape in France in the early 17th century and was so popular that the discarded lemon peels that littered the streets of Paris may have helped stave off an outbreak of plague. This recipe from 1651 is quite tart by modern tastes. It adds oranges to the mix, which sweeten it a bit and add a refreshing twist.

Ingredients

1 quart of water

1 cup of sugar

6 small lemons

6 small oranges

Ice cubes

Utensils

knife and cutting board

measuring cup

lemon reamer

lemon zester

2 pitchers

wooden spoon

coffee filter

Zest ½ of a lemon and ½ of an orange. Cut all the fruit in half. Place the water and sugar in one of the pitchers. Using the wooden spoon stir until the sugar dissolves. Using the reamer, juice the fruit, and add the juice to the pitcher. Add the zest and stir. Using the other pitcher, pour the lemonade back and forth between the two pitchers several times to thoroughly mix the lemonade. Strain the lemonade through a coffee filter. This will take a bit of time and patience. Chill the lemonade in the refrigerator and serve over ice.