



Lebanese Lemonade

Homemade lemonade is a delicious treat and very popular in Lebanon and, especially in summer, a typical way to welcome guests. Lebanese lemonade is also called Batrouni lemonade after the resort town of Batroun in northern Lebanon, famous for its beaches, nightlife and lemonade. In 2012 Batroun entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest cup of soft drink with a giant cup holding 5,534 litres of lemonade made from about 2,300 litres of fresh lemon juice! Here's the traditional way to make Lebanese lemonade, adjust the taste to suit yourself by adding as much water as you like to balance the flavour.

Makes about 750ml

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup castor sugar
- 5 lemons
- 1½ cups chilled water
- Ice cubes, for serving
- Orange blossom water, to taste (optional)



METHOD

1. Gently scrub the skins of the lemons with a clean scourer then dry them.
2. Roll each lemon under the palm of your hand on a clean work surface to soften it; this is a typical Middle Eastern trick for getting the most juice out of a lemon.
3. Slice them finely and layer into a large bowl with a good sprinkling of sugar between each layer.
4. Sprinkle any remaining sugar over the top.
5. Mash well with a potato masher or wooden spoon.
6. Cover and set aside in a cool place for 18–24 hours, crushing and stirring the mixture several times.
7. Pour the lemon and liquid into a fine strainer over a large bowl.
8. Squeeze the lemon slices in your hands to extract as much juice as possible, then return them to the first bowl.
9. Add water and mix with your hands for a few of minutes, squeezing the slices to extract as much of the remaining juice and flavour as possible.
10. Tip into the strainer, squeeze the slices, then discard them.
11. Transfer the liquid to a jug and refrigerate until needed.
12. Serve over ice, diluted with enough water to suit your taste and with a few drops of orange blossom water if you like.