

Preserved Lemons

Two Recipes from Paula Wolfert

Paula Wolfert has written many wonderful cookbooks about Mediterranean Food. Her cookbooks on Moroccan cooking are classics of our times. Preserved lemons are the most important condiment in Moroccan cooking, and they are used widely in Mediterranean cooking with fish, meat and salads.

Preserved Lemons with Cardamom and Bay Leaves

6 medium sized lemons (unwaxed)

½ cup kosher salt

1 tablespoon cardamom pods

3 bay leaves

1 cup lemon juice, or more if needed

1. Cut the lemons in quarters lengthwise, leaving them attached at one end. Rub the flesh with a little of the salt. Place 1 Tablespoon of salt in the bottom of a 1-quart glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Place the lemons in the jar alternately with the remaining salt, cardamom pods and bay leaves, pressing the lemons to fit them snugly in the jar.

2. Pour in enough lemon juice to cover the lemons. Put on the lid and refrigerate, shaking the jar daily for 2 to 3 weeks before using. These lemons, covered with liquid and tightly sealed, will keep for several months in the refrigerator.

Preserved Lemons: A Quick Five-Day Version

With a sharp knife, make 8 fine, 2-inch vertical incisions around the peel of each lemon. Do not cut into the membrane, which protects the pulp. Place the lemons in a stainless-steel saucepan with plenty of salt and water to cover and then boil until the peels become very soft, about 5 - 10 minutes. Place in a clean jar, cover with the cooled cooking liquid, and leave in the refrigerator for five days.

Lemons preserved in this way will not keep for a long period of time.