

1  
The key  
ingredients



## The Lemon Symbol of Hope

We're often schooled to be sceptical about the virtue of hope. It can seem naive and childlike to be hopeful. Such worries seem misplaced, however. Too many of our plans get derailed not because they are unworkable or misguided but because our reserves of hope have been depleted. We can't keep faith with the arduousness of our lives and its projects and give up before we can do ourselves justice.

The lemon is an ultimate symbol of hope, and on this basis deserves a place in our kitchens and our endeavours. It carries with it the sense of having ripened slowly in the sunshine; as if it had absorbed and condensed the warmest and most confident days of summer. These it appears to have artfully compressed, doing in the realm of taste what a camera does with time. Even on the saddest, most fog-bound winter days, a lemon on the window ledge speaks of moments when we still dared to have faith in ourselves, and bids us to recover a connection to our former positivity.

With its brilliant outer colour and its forceful bracing inner joy, the lemon is our ally in the continuing struggle against giving up. We'll get through this; it will eventually be the weekend; disagreements worse than this can get resolved. The lemon is a friend in our mind's attempts to structure arguments why it might, after all, be worth enduring. Maybe the anxiety will end. Perhaps the project will work out. The arguments might stop. Our enemies could get bored and turn elsewhere. Our reputation might recover. The mood could lift. A lot of things could, in the end, be more or less OK – bearable, even. All this the lemon knows how to whisper.

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## Preserved lemon pasta

### Ingredients:

350 g | 12 oz spaghetti, or linguine  
4 tbsp olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp anchovy fillets, in oil, drained and finely chopped (optional)  
½ preserved lemon, finely chopped  
4 tbsp Parmesan, grated, plus extra to serve  
1 handful flat-leaf parsley, chopped

### salt

freshly ground black pepper

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Makes: 4 servings

- 1 Cook the spaghetti in a large saucepan of salted, boiling water until just tender to the bite (*al dente*), about 10 minutes.
- 2 Drain well and reserve a small cup of the starchy cooking water.
- 3 Heat the olive oil in a large high-sided frying or sauté pan set over a medium heat until hot.
- 4 Add the garlic and anchovy, if using, cooking and stirring for 30 seconds. Stir in the preserved lemon and continue cook for a further 30 seconds until fragrant.
- 5 Add the drained spaghetti and a most of the reserved cooking water, stirring and shaking the pan over a medium heat until glossy in appearance, about 2 minutes.
- 6 Remove from the heat and sprinkle over the Parmesan, stirring well to create a creamy sauce; if needed, add more of the reserved cooking water to loosen.
- 7 When ready to serve, season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide between bowls and top with parsley and more Parmesan.

## Lemon curd

### Ingredients:

100 g | ½ cup butter  
350 g | 1 ½ cups sugar  
2 tsp lemon zest  
7 unwaxed lemons, juiced  
4 very fresh eggs  
40 ml Cointreau (optional)

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Makes: 3 × 350 g jars

- 1 Melt the butter in a bain-marie along with the sugar, lemon zest and the lemon juice.
- 2 Beat the eggs and add them gradually to the mixture until it takes on a creamy consistency. Stir in the Cointreau at this point if you're using.
- 3 Pour the mixture into sterilised jars, close tightly and store in a cool, dark place.

### Tips

To sterilise jars, wash them in hot, soapy water or put through the hot cycle of a dishwasher. Do not dry off – instead, place the wet jars into an oven set to 160°C (140° fan) | 325F | gas 3 for 15 minutes. Leave to cool before filling.