



Meet Luigi from Amalfi. At 83, he is still cultivating the lemons that make Limoncello.

Limocello. Strong, lemony, and best served ice cold.

The gorgeous Sorrento/Amalfi/Capri area is where those spectacular lemons are grown that form the base of limoncello. If you go to any of these picturesque places, bottles of the elixir are lined up for sale everywhere. Yellow filled bottles in every size, color, shape and price!

What's the story behind this beautiful yellow liquid that leaves a slightly burning trail as it slithers down your throat?

There are many different stories about the origins of limoncello. One story says local fishermen and farmers in the Middle Ages, used to drink a shot

of limoncello in the early morning to warm up.

Others say that the recipe originated inside an abbey to delight the monks in between prayers. (Don't know how many prayers they said but they surely must have been very delighted when they were done.)



Sfogliatella means many, many, many layers

Legends also say that limoncello and other liqueurs of fermented spices, fruits, and herbs were developed in convents. In the early 1600s, the nuns of the Santa Rosa convent in Conca dei Marini were using limoncello to give their famous lemon pastry sfogliatella Santa Rosa its authentic taste. (Conca dei Marini sits on the Amalfi Coast among lemon orchards.)

But we do know that its been around for at least 100 years.

The most consistent story says that it was born at the beginning of the 20th century in a small inn on Capri, where Maria Antonia Farace had a garden of lemons and oranges. Her grandson, after World War II, opened a restaurant nearby whose specialty was the lemon liqueur made following the old recipe of his nonna. In 1988, the grandson's son, Massimo Canale, started production of limoncello and registered its mark.

Along the Amalfi Coast there are lemon trees growing in abundance on terraced groves. The lemon varieties are so particularly sweet that locals eat thick slices of the fruit, skin and all, sometimes with a dusting of sugar. (Is your mouth puckering?)

As in all of Italy, growing and producing agricultural-based products follows strict guidelines to ensure the integrity of the end product. The lemons from this peninsula and the island of Capri follow the rules for the Limone di Sorrento IGP (Protected Geographic Indication) resulting in the best limoncello.

So what makes these lemons so special? They depend on the microclimate, the proximity to the sea, and protection from the cold winds thanks to the use of traditional pagliarelle (straw matting) covering the

groves and held up with chestnut tree poles. The best lemons are harvested from February to September and is still done by carrying baskets of lemons up and down the ancient stone steps. The lemons are picked by hand so that none come in contact with the soil. The lemons grow with a thick skin that is rich with essential oils, fragrant and with a strong aroma. Although a highly alcoholic liqueur, the perfume and flavor of these lemons makes the liqueur sweet and pleasing to the taste.

The lemon skin is the most important ingredient when making limoncello. There are two varieties used: Femminiello (oval in shape, smooth skin and very juicy) and the Sfusato from Amalfi (tapered shape, large with a thick yellow peel and almost no seeds).

Take a look at this video about the "Flying Farmer" from Amalfi. It is the story of Luigi, the 83 year old lemon farmer who has the agility of a 30 year old. He is a simple man and his story easily conveys his passion for what he does and the real importance of maintaining the lemon groves in Amalfi.

[Click here to see his amazing work.](#)

Making limoncello is deceptively simple--anyone can do it. It may not taste as good as the stuff from Amalfi (you don't have those special lemons!) but it'll still be good. Try to use organic lemons since you'll be soaking the peels for the flavor. Regular lemons are chemically treated and often have a waxy coating. It's been said that Meyer lemons don't work as well.



The lemons have to be peeled; only use the yellow part--no pith.

The most simple recipe is on the Club's website. [Click here to go directly to it.](#) While most recipes instruct you to make the simple sugar separately and add it at the end this recipe mixes everything together at the beginning. All you need is a bit of patience. There are also about a hundred recipes on the internet to pick from.



Limoncello Cookies



*Limoncello (not
coffee) Tiramisu*



Limoncello Cake

What else can you do with limoncello besides drink it straight (cold) from the fridge, or pour it over vanilla ice cream? The possibilities are virtually endless: tiramisu, pasta, risotto, cakes, cookies, sorbets, tarts--you name it! Here are just a few photos to give you some incentive. And, if you finally get to go to Italy, you may be offered some after your meal by the owner of the ristorante. They will sometimes bring out a glass for you finish off your meal.



Limoncello Risotto



Limoncello Sorbet



Limoncello Pasta

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