

RANCH & COAST

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wine, dine & entertain

Pucker Up

It's hard to think of a fruit that garners more praise than the Meyer lemon. Martha Stewart is always yakking about Meyer lemons, celebrity chefs find them in the "mystery ingredient" basket on the television show Iron Chef, and every year between October and January they appear on the cover of just about every food magazine there is.

The Meyer lemon (named after Frank Meyer, who is credited with bringing the esteemed fruit to the U.S. from China in 1908) is a favorite of chefs and gourmards and is actually not a lemon at all, but rather a hybrid. It's thought to be a cross between a lemon and a mandarin orange, which explains its sweeter flavor, orangey flesh, and thin, smooth skin.

Meyer lemons are not easy to find outside of California as our climate makes a happy environment for this highly revered citrus. Because of its affable flavor, this lemon makes special guest appearances during its peak season on the menus of many of our area's most popular restaurants. — Terry! Gavre, photos by Vincent Knakal

JANUARY RECIPES

Maine Lobster & Meyer Lemon Risotto

By executive chef Orion Balliet of Azul La Jolla

- 1 ½ lb live Maine lobster
- Zest & juice of 1 Meyer lemon
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1 diced yellow onion
- 4 oz. butter
- 1 cup white vermouth
- 1 diced tomato concassee
- 1 cup lobster stock (from extra shell)
- 2 cups water *depending on type of rice
- 4 oz. grated Parmesan cheese

Prepare lobster by first pulling off claws and tail. (Do not worry because it has been proven that crustaceans do not have pain receptors.) Place a small butter knife along bottom of tail so it will remain straight during cooking. Poach in boiling salted water that has a little lemon juice. First drop claws in for 2 minutes. Now add tail and cook for 3 more minutes. Remove all lobster and shock in ice water until

Dining Out >>



[Maine Lobster and Meyer Lemon Risotto](#) by executive chef Orion Balliet of [Azul La Jolla](#)



[Meyer Lemon Semifreddo](#) by chef Jack Fisher of [Nine-Ten in La Jolla](#)

chilled. Remove poached meat and set aside.

Prepare simple lobster stock by first removing gills with a pair of scissors or fingertips. This is because the gill will make the stock bitter. Now, just cover shells with water and bring to simmer for 20 minutes. Strain and discard shells.

While lobster stock is being made you can par cook the Arborio rice. First start by sweating the chopped yellow onion in butter on low heat until translucent. Next add rice and cook in 2 oz. butter for a few minutes. Now add vermouth and cook on low until almost dry. Add water (1 cup at a time and cook risotto while stirring). Risotto should take about 20 minutes to par cook. When rice is desired consistency, spread out shallow on pan and chill.

To put risotto together, bring lobster stock to boil and add lemon zest and juice. Let reduce by $\frac{3}{4}$. Add risotto and season with salt and pepper. Finish risotto with butter, Parmesan cheese, lobster chunks, and tomato concassees.

Garnish with Parmesan cheese and herbs of your choice. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Some stock can also be left over to pour over risotto like a sauce.

Yields 2 plates

Meyer Lemon Semifreddo

By chef Jack Fisher of Nine-Ten in La Jolla

1 Cup Heavy Whipping Cream
 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Granulated Sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Water
 5 Egg Yolks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Meyer Lemon Juice

Whip cream to medium peaks and set aside. Combine water and sugar in medium saucepan. Cook until temperature reaches 246 degrees Fahrenheit. While sugar is cooking, whip egg yolks in the bowl of an electric mixer at medium speed. When syrup is ready, slowly add syrup to whipping egg yolks on medium slow speed. Continue to whip on medium speed until mixture is at room temperature. Add lemon juice slowly to egg mixture. Whisk in $\frac{1}{3}$ of the whipped cream and then fold in remaining cream, mix until smooth. Divide mixture between 8 bowls. Wrap tightly with plastic and freeze at least 4 hours and up to 3 days. Remove from freezer 5 minutes before serving. Serve with fresh citrus, blueberries, or favorite cookie.

Serves 8 (4 oz. Portions)

Marinated Hamachi with Meyer Lemon Relish, Cucumber and Crème Fraîche

By executive chef Ryan Johnston of Blackhorse Grille

21 oz. sashimi grade hamachi
 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. crème fraîche
 49 thin slices of cucumber
 49 waffle potato chips
 4 oz. micro arugula
 12 oz. Meyer lemon relish
 7 oz. guacamole

Meyer Lemon Relish
 1 oz diced shallot
 0.5 oz white wine vinegar
 2 oz Meyer lemon juice
 4 oz olive oil
 1 oz chopped parsley
 0.5 oz chopped chive
 2 oz Meyer lemon zest
 (Combine all ingredients)



Marinated Hamachi with Meyer lemon, avocado, and crème fraîche by chef Ryan Johnston of [Blackhorse Grille](#) in Del Mar



Lemon Berry Tart by chef Randy Gruber of [Americana](#) in Del Mar

Finely chop hamachi until it is smooth and creamy. Combine 6 oz. of relish and hamachi together. On each plate: fan out 7 pieces of cucumber in a 1-inch ring mold. Place 1 oz. guacamole and 3 oz. hamachi directly on top of cucumber. Press to form a tight mold. Place ½ oz. crème fraîche quenelle on top of hamachi. Place waffle chips behind the mold and drizzle 1 oz. Meyer lemon relish around the cucumber. Garnish with ½ oz. micro arugula.

(serves 7)

Meyer Lemon Berry Tart

By Randy Gruber of Americana in Del Mar

LEMON PASTRY

¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
Zest of 1 large lemon
1 vanilla bean, split length wise, seeds removed
4 ½ ounces (1 stick plus 1 tablespoon) unsalted butter
2 ½ cups flour
1 egg
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

LEMON CURD

1 cup sugar
Grated zest of 2 large lemons
½ cup fresh lemon juice
4 eggs
1 egg yolk
6 oz. (1 ½ sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

GARNISH

About 2 cups fresh seasonal berries

For the pastry: Beat the powdered sugar, lemon zest, vanilla seeds, and butter together. Add half the flour mix until the texture is crumblike. Add the egg and lemon juice, then the rest of the flour. Mix until dough holds together. Gather dough into a ball, wrap with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Roll out the dough and fit it into an 8-inch tart tin. Bake until slightly brown around the edges, about 20 minutes. Allow to cool.

For the lemon curd: In a bowl or the top part of a double boiler, place the lemon zest and sugar and rub together. Add the lemon juice, eggs, and egg yolk, and mix well. Place the bowl over barely simmering water and stir continuously until thick. Once the curd has thickened, take it off the heat and beat in the pieces of butter. Refrigerate the curd for at least one hour.

Spread the chilled lemon curd in the pastry shell. Top with mixed berries and serve.

Chef's note: This recipe yields one large tart, however it also works well to fill 6 smaller tart tins for individual desserts.



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