

Limone di Sorrento (Oval of Sorrento)



Bella Vita

MEDITERRANEAN TASTE



General Overview

Common lemon known as Lemon of Massa or “Massese” (Cultivar Massese) or Oval of Sorrento. Medium-large dimensions, with a medium thickness peel of citrine yellow color rich of essential oils that make the fruit really fragrant. The straw-colored pulp is very juicy, high acid, and has a particular aroma due to the local soil, climate, and growing techniques.

History / Background

The portrayal of the lemon in mosaics and paintings that came to light with the excavations of Pompeii shows their common use in the Neapolitan area since ancient times. What is certain is that this citrus fruit has acclimatised incredibly well to the land in Campania and has prospered marvellously, until becoming at one with it. So much so that it would be impossible to imagine the Amalfi and Sorrento Coasts without their charming, beautiful and extremely fragrant lemon gardens. Without the characteristic terraces full of flowers or the dramatic contrast between the blue of the sea, the yellow of the fruit and the intense green of the foliage, in a blaze of color enhanced by the strong dazzling light, this landscape, which is one of the most beautiful in the world, would not be quite so unique. However, it is not just the colors or the other charming elements that attract many appreciative tourists, the lemon groves also offer other important advantages, such as the protection of the territory: by occupying even the steepest slopes, which are often on the verge of being impossible to cultivate, they help to preserve the soil from hydrogeological instability. The local people are very attached to the lemon, to the extent that there is hardly a family in the area that does not have a small or large plot of land of lemon trees, acquired and maintained with hard work and sacrifice. The first specialised lemon groves on the Sorrento Peninsula were the work of the Jesuit fathers, who created an ad hoc farm in 1600 in the Guarazzano basin, between Sorrento and Massalubrense. It is here that an ecotype of the Femminello Ovale variety gradually differentiated through time to form the present cultivar defined as the Ovale di Sorrento, Massese or Massalubrense lemon. It has taken on characteristics of high quality which earned the Sorrento Lemon IGP recognition (Protected Geographical Indication) in November 2000: an important result for the whole of citrus-farming in Campania region both for the prestige it brought to the sector and in terms of new commercial opportunities.



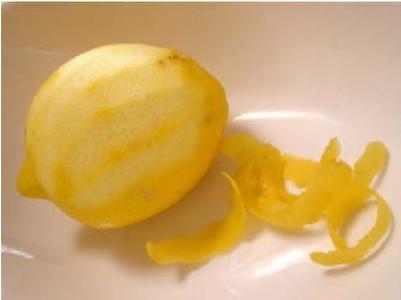
Consorzio di Tutela



Characteristics

The lemon is medium-large, elliptical, with an attractive lemon-yellow skin, very fragrant and with a particularly juicy and acidic flesh. Today it is grown in all the communes of the Sorrento Peninsula and all over the island of Capri, both in the province of Naples. It is a tardy fruit, so that, although it is produced on the tree all year round, the best fruit are obtained from January to September. Cultivation is typically made up of terraces incorporated in containment walls. Another technical aspect is the covering up of the foliage to protect it from the cold and wind (an indispensable practice during the

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coldest period of the year because of the geographical position of the Sorrento Peninsula, which is at the northern limit of latitude for lemon-growing) and to delay the ripening of the fruit until the best commercial periods. In the past the well-known "pagliarelle" were used: straw mats resting on wooden stakes, usually of chestnut wood. Today they have been replaced by more practical plastic nets, which are more suitable for the steeper slopes of the area.

Uses

The Sorrento Lemon already enjoyed a good reputation during the last century, when it was mainly exported to England. Today a moderate quantity of lemons is still exported to European markets, mainly German and British, but most of the produce is reserved for the domestic market; 40% is destined for fresh consumption and the remaining 60% is used to make the famous Limoncello liqueur from the Sorrento and Amalfi area. Today there is a huge number of little shops that make this liqueur by macerating lemon skins in alcohol, sticking scrupulously to old recipes from the local tradition. Demand for the Sorrento Lemon is constant, thanks to its highly valued properties and, consequently, the prices are always decidedly higher than those of ordinary lemons on the market.



Limoncello Parties:

