

# Oh, limes and lemons!

Lemon was always just lemon to me. When I lived in Bangladesh, I wasn't even aware of the difference between a lime and a lemon. What we called lemon back home was actually lime. Lemons are yellow, limes are green. To me, lime was a simple, green, oval-shaped sour fruit that my mom used to make lemonade back in the day. I also liked lime juice in my food. I would always squeeze a slice of lime on my rice and curry to give it that tangy taste.

I also remember eating the edible kind when my father would bring it home from the bazaar. I remember always taking a small bite from a slice with every mouthful of rice and curry. It would add a sour taste to my food which I always loved. Over the years, I discovered there were many other uses to these versatile citrus fruits.

If you are one of those people troubled by zits then you can really enjoy the benefits of using lime and lemon juice. These can help reduce pimples and acne. I was really skeptical about them but after giving them a try, I realised that it worked. If your skin is not very sensitive, you can prepare a simple face pack using lemon/lime juice and honey to treat your

pimples, scars, and blemishes. Just remember to avoid direct exposure to the sun after applying this mixture.

If you want to make your nails look all pink and shiny, scrub them with a slice of lemon or just soak them in lemon juice. These will help you get rid of the yellow stain, which you sometimes get from wearing nail polish for too long.

Limes and lemons are also very useful in the kitchen. We regularly use lemon juice to remove pungent smells from uncooked fish and meat. On days we cook a lot and the house smells of curry, I put slices of lemon and cinnamon sticks in a pan and boil it. You will be surprised to see how quickly it kills unwanted smells. You can also use lime or lemon juice to get stubborn smells off your own hands. Just rinse your hands in a mixture of water and lemon or lime juice.

A mixture of lemon juice and water is also a great hair conditioner. I first started using it as a measure to limit my hair and body's exposure to artificial ingredients and chemicals. Citrus conditioning is very simple and cheap. All you need to do is just make a mixture of water and freshly-

squeezed lemon juice and apply it to your hair after a shampoo. Keep it on for five minutes and then rinse. It works best on oily hair.

I buy a bag of lemons every week, because they are so useful. I even throw lemon slices in my trashcan to reduce garbage odour. Have you ever noticed the stains hard water and soap leave on your shower handles, kitchen and bathroom faucets? There is an easy solution to removing them. Just rub lemon peel on your faucets, wash with water, and dry with a soft cloth. You can also use lemon peels to remove stains from your tea and coffee pots and kettles. Just fill your tea or coffee pot with water, add some lemon peels and bring it to a boil. You can also sprinkle some salt in your coffee mug or teacup and rub it with a lemon peel vigorously to remove the brown stains often caused by your favourite caffeinated beverage.

So from now on when life gives you lemons, keep them; you know you can use them to make a lot more than just lemonade.

**By Wara Karim**

# How to survive the summer

Summer has been a drag so far as the heat waves keep sweeping over our tropical motherland. It might give you a headache realising that we are only halfway through summer. However, summer can actually be pleasant, especially once you figure out how to make the best of it. So here are a few pointers to make your summer easier.

## USE SUNSCREEN

Unless you want a nasty tan, which can be the root of various skin problems, do not leave the house without sunscreen. Sunscreens protect you from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays either by scattering the light and reflecting it away from your body, or by absorbing the UV rays before they reach your skin. Pick a sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher. Since chances are that you will be sweating a lot during the summer, it's better to pick a sunscreen that is water-resistant. Before going out, apply a generous amount onto the exposed areas of the skin and always keep it with you so that you can reapply it whenever you need to. Take special care to see if you are allergic to the sunscreen, in which case you should stop using the brand immediately and go see a doctor.

## WEAR COTTON

Natural fabrics such as cotton are more comfortable during the summer as they are lightweight and allow better air circulation. This helps in absorbing and removing body moisture caused by sweat, thus keeping the body cooler. Moreover, cotton reduces the severity of any allergic reaction and thus, is perfect for those with sensitive skin.

Opt for lighter coloured clothing so that more of the sun's rays are reflected and you feel cooler.

## CARRY AN UMBRELLA

Umbrellas are an excellent shade from the sun if you have to walk during a hot summer afternoon. Also, having an umbrella will keep you prepared for any sudden spells of rain. You can pick them in many different sizes and colours. Go for a small umbrella, if you like travelling light. However, these aren't very strong and so they may not be long-lasting. Larger, stronger umbrellas are obviously more durable, but aren't as portable.

## STAY HYDRATED

Carry a water bottle wherever you go. If you find drinking water a bit boring, add a bit of Foster Clark's or Tang to it. These are available in various flavours in departmental stores and you can switch every few days to try out different flavours. Also, take advantage of the delicious summer fruits around. Nothing will be as refreshing as a cold glass of homemade mango or watermelon juice!

## USE AN ICE PACK

Put an ice pack on the pulse points of your body, where the blood vessels are close to the skin, for a few seconds. This will have an instant cooling effect and will make you feel more relaxed. Some of the pulse points include the insides of your wrists, on your neck, on the insides of your ankles and near your temples. This trick is especially helpful for those insanely hot days with extreme load shedding, when even

your generator or IPS decides to betray you.

## HAVE A COOKING SCHEDULE

Since cooking will generate extra heat in the kitchen, thus heating up the whole house, it is better not to cook all throughout the day. It may be a bit difficult for those who do a lot of cooking, but if possible, try to get into a habit of cooking in batches so that you don't heat up your house all throughout the day. Open all the windows after you are done cooking to allow the heat to escape outside faster.

## REPLACE THE LIGHTS

Switch to LED lights throughout your house as incandescent bulbs generate a lot more heat, thus making the rooms hotter. Moreover, if you use LED lights, you will conserve more energy and your electricity bills will be lower. So, in a way, you are actually helping both yourself and the environment!

## STAY INSIDE

Even though this sounds slightly bizarre, don't bother going out unless you really have to. If you get a break, instead of going out to eat, spend some quality time at home. Enjoying the lazy summer vibe is a must for everyone at least for one day! So, keep a day aside when you can put on an old forgotten tune that you once listened to for hours on repeat, and sit back to enjoy your favourite novel. Or you could just get some popcorn and watch a movie. You'll be surprised how miraculously recharged you'll feel for the upcoming days afterwards.

**By Adiba Mahbub Proma**

# A floral reminiscence

In her emerald dress, she offered two bouquets of flowers – one for my guest's wife, and the other for my friend, Rehana with whom I was staying. This was much later in life. By then, she had already become involved with someone from the Air Force.

We would play with our paper dolls and her pet dog, Tiger. Whenever we had milk, we shared it with her Siamese cats. Her father owned a shop and used to work from a car. Her mother was a quarter German and had a strong jawline, similar to Jackie Kennedy. My friend had also inherited this feature. They sent her brother abroad to carry on their tradition.

We would always look forward to plays so much that we even watched rehearsals. We played sports like handball and netball. Back then, I was jealous of a girl called Maria, who won so many trophies that a horse carriage would be needed to carry all her prizes home. Many people came and went from our lives, but Perween and I have stuck together as thick as thieves. A wonderful person with a heart of gold, fate, it seems, was cruel to her; one of Perween's greatest tragedies was that she had lost her first baby.

I still remember how quickly she finished her English paper, and went home early during the exams to sign her marriage papers. It was all so romantic when we were in our teens.

When my mother fell sick during my first year of college, Perween was one of the few friends that were allowed to come and visit her. We kept up our friendship throughout college, but then she got married, and went to university and later, got a job to teach there, followed by my stint at journalism. And boy was that an adventure!

Many decades later, I went to visit her and a couple of other friends as a journalist. She was just as warm and hospitable as ever. She took me to all these exciting places to eat and have our own little adventures, like visiting the art galleries around the Clifton area. We also did other things like shopping for clothes, carpets, etc. It felt as though we were never apart and I will cherish these memories forever.

**By Fayza Haq**