



River Gourmet

A modern take on citrus marmalades

by Tonya Jennings - On the Ridge Cooking School

Making marmalades, jams and preserves is wonderfully satisfying and reminiscent of times gone by, of mothers and grandmothers, when everything grown in the garden was harvested and preserved. Much pleasure is gained from the making, as well as satisfaction in seeing the fruits of our labour prettily lined up in our pantry. Marmalade was originally made from quinces and it takes its name from marmelada the Portuguese word for quince. Enjoying our marmalade on hot buttery toast at breakfast time is a delicious start to the day.

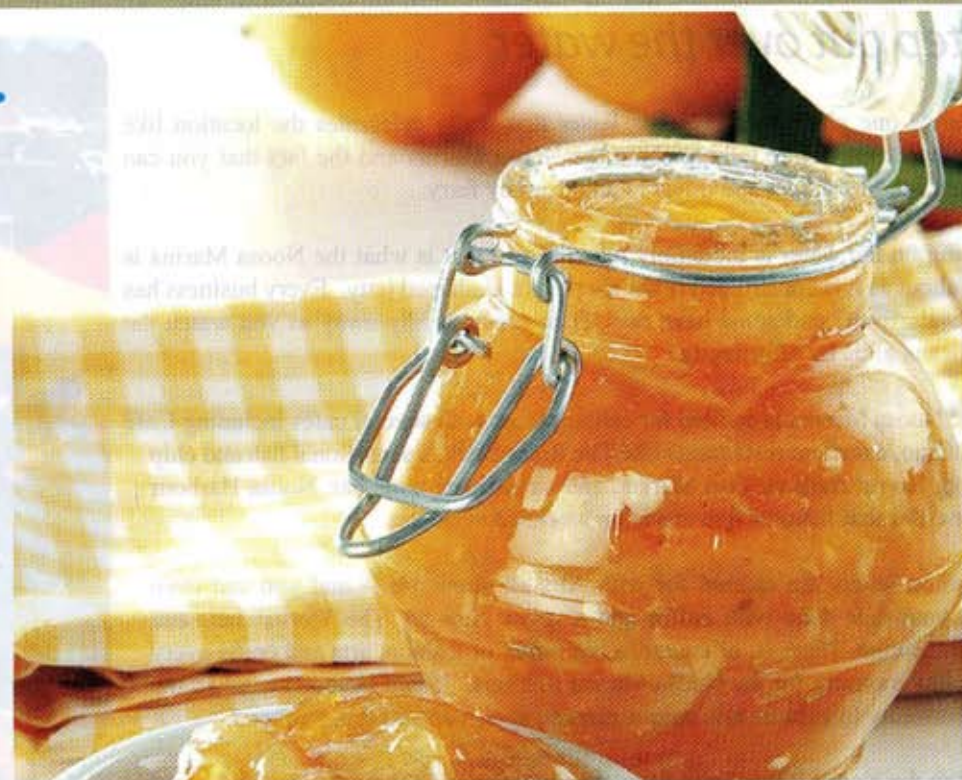
Now is a good time for making citrus marmalades – lemons, limes, oranges, mandarins, cumquats and grapefruit. Friends here on Kureelpa Falls Road grow various citrus trees that are all now heavily laden with fruit. Lorraine and Geoff as well as Jenny and Roger supply the neighbourhood with juicy mandarins, limes, oranges, lemons and grapefruits, so we are now all making marmalades. When one friend asked for some marmalade recipes I went to the myriad of cookbooks I have collected over the years for some recipes. Interestingly I kept returning to my old favourites, especially the mandarin and cumquat. I also found one for quince!

There are also some modern takes on marmalades.

We here at On the Ridge, have a particular fondness for chilli marmalades. Our lime, kaffir lime leaves and chilli marmalade is always a hit in class when served with barbecued scallops – what a sensation!

When buying citrus fruits, look for those that are heavy for their size; they will be juicier. The skins should be firm, glossy and unbroken. The colour is relatively unimportant, although we do prefer the look of bright yellow or orange fruit. Some green on the skin indicates exposure to the sunlight and not ripeness. Brown mottling, called russetting, does not indicate unsound fruit either; in fact in grapefruit it may mean the juice is sweeter.

There are two cooking stages in the marmalade making process. The first stage extracts the pectin, reduces the contents of the pan by about half and softens the peel. This must be done properly so the marmalade will set. Much of the pectin in oranges is in the pips and membranes and it is essential to extract it all. Put all the pips and any loose membranes in a clean piece of muslin, tie with a string and place in the pot so it can be easily removed after the first cooking stage; squeeze all the juice from it and discard.



During the second stage, sugar is added, and stirred over low heat until completely dissolved. Quickly, bring the marmalade to boiling point and boil rapidly, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until it jells when tested.

The golden rule is slow cooking before the addition of sugar, and rapid, short cooking afterwards. Do not boil the marmalade until all sugar has dissolved.

Our tips for marmalade making

- Always use fruit at room temperature.
- Choose good quality, well washed, unblemished fruit, not over-ripe.
- Use a good, large, flat heavy based pan and a wooden spoon.
- Carefully follow the instructions for the cooking time; marmalade is spoilt by too much cooking as well as too little. It is cooked much longer than jams, at least one hour, sometimes two or three; so you need more water to allow for evaporation.
- Skim any scum that arises and watch carefully so the marmalade does not burn.
- Before bottling, test to see if the marmalade will set. Place a saucer in the freezer and when ready, drop a teaspoon of marmalade onto the saucer. As

it cools, the surface should wrinkle when pushed. Alternatively, drop a teaspoon of marmalade into iced water – it should form a ball, not dissolve.

- Fruit must reach a temperature of at least 100°C when cooking to kill any bacteria, so a thermometer is useful.
 - When the marmalade has reached setting point, skim again before bottling, to remove any scum.
 - Fill the jars to within 5mm of the top. The air space in the jar, the less opportunity for mould to develop on top of the marmalade.
 - To seal the marmalade, cover with a piece of paraffin wax and then cellophane, moisten the outside with water to ensure a taut cover is secure with an elastic band to hold the cellophane in place. There must be no condensation between the marmalade and its cover or mould will develop on top. To avoid this, cover the marmalade hot or completely cold; never cover when warm.
- For our mandarin marmalade and our kaffir lime leaves and chilli marmalade recipes visit On the Ridge Cooking School website – www.ontheridge.com.au and enjoy marmalade making.**