

# Lime

## History

There are two main types of limes: Tahitian and Mexican. The “true” lime is the Mexican lime. It is also called the “West Indian lime” and, more commonly, the “Key lime.” It is native to Malaysia and was unknown to Europe until the time of the Crusades when Crusaders brought the lime to Mediterranean Europe. By the mid-13th century it was being cultivated in Italy and France. It was then taken to the Caribbean islands and Mexico by the Spaniards and was commonly being grown in Haiti in 1520. Limes made their way to Florida and became a popular crop in the early 1900s where it was grown in the Florida Keys. Due to its popularity in the Florida Keys, it was given the name “Key lime.”

The Tahitian lime is also called the “Persian lime,” but the true origin is unknown. It is thought to be a hybrid of the Mexican lime and is believed to have been introduced to Mediterranean Europe by spreading throughout Persia, giving the fruit its name.

Portuguese traders brought the Persian lime to Brazil and then Australia. It was later introduced to California from Tahiti between 1850 and 1880. Whether called the Persian or Tahitian lime, it is now the lime most commonly seen in grocery stores. While it is not as flavorful as the Mexican lime, it is a much hardier plant. Due to its hardiness, Florida citrus growers started growing the Persian/Tahitian lime.

British sailors took limes with them on long voyages to prevent a vitamin C deficiency from occurring- in fact, British sailors were called “limeys” because of the number of limes they would eat



## Fun Facts

- Limes increase in weight after they are picked.
- Limes turn yellow as they ripen.
- Limes that are riper are sweeter and juicier than immature limes.
- Limes are more fragrant and acidic than lemons.
- Limes, like all citrus fruits, are loaded with vitamin C.
- Limes have very little natural sugar in them- a whole lime only has one gram of sugar in it while a whole orange has 12 grams of sugar.



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