



Lugar do Olhar Feliz

Bergamot orange - Bergamote - bergamota - bergamotto
(*Citrus x bergamia*)



Cultivation : Mediterranean citrus fruit, hardiness 9b, grows in the same climate as lemon trees. Produced since 1750 near Reggio of Calabria for its essential oils, small production in Africa. Organic cultivation is rare.

3 variétés : fantastico / femminello / castagnaro . Harvests from December till February.

Harvest / Quality : Harvest before maturity when the peel is richest in essential oils. The essential oils are more interesting for culinary purposes when harvested later as the peel just starts to turn yellow. Leaves are also aromatic.

Conservation : Fresh fruit : 3 days between 6° - 8°. Freezing recommended

Flavour / Fragrance : strong, singular

Use in cooking : The bergamot has a unique scent. It is used in Earl Grey tea, "eau de cologne", and to flavour candy (bergamots de Nancy)

In the 18th century "eau de cologne" was not used as perfume but as medication especially to help digestion. 18th century recipe : soak bergamot, lemon, Seville orange, and citron zests with rosemary in 90° alcohol for 3 days, filter, dilute with water to obtain 50°. Serve a sugar cube soaked in the eau de cologne to accompany coffee.

Zests : The **zest is quite bitter**, it is most often infused (liqueur [soak 3 days in 90° alcohol and dilute with sugar & water syrup], vinegar [soak for 24 hours excellent with green salad], flavoured olive oil or bergamot zest in brine or confite in sugar, flavours honey, wine, mustard. Only soak the zest for a short time or it becomes bitter. You can blanch it like a lemon zest.

- sweets : candies, barley sugar, jams or jellies, bergamotto cake, madeleine à la bergamotte. (Pierre Gagnaire), icecream, candied zests (is **good with chocolate**), Cioccolata al Bergamotto = chocolat + ricotta al bergamotto, Susumelle al Bergamotto = honey cake with bergamot, with almonds = dolce di Reggio Calabria, instead of limoncello (baba à la bergamot), custards, la crème brûlée.
- with fruit : mirabelle pie with bergamot, apple pie alla marmellata di bergamotto, poire refroidie à la b. et glace au beurre salé (A. Senderens), *Berg'Amour* = bergamote fruit jellies.
- savoury : with lamb - Agnello al bergamotto, pork. Fish marinades (middle east). With rice - riso al bergamotto, with fish : Féra du Léman grillée aux agrumes, fenouil et poireaux confits (C. Aribert Uriage), tartare de thon, poivron rouge confit à la bergamote et au jambon séché (J. Rebuchon)
- with vegetables : with white cabbage or cauliflower.

Whole fruit : can be confit and the juice can be used like sudachi juice in Japan : on grilled fish, to flavour water (Ile Maurice).

Also :

- flavours without bitterness in sous-vide cooking
- the bergamot *can* be replaced by a zest of Indian sweet lime which gives the flavour, though not as strong, without the bitterness

Link : <http://olharfeliz.typepad.com/citrus>

