

Getting zesty with citrus fruits

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(HealthDay)—Want to be part of the movement to limit food waste of all kinds? One tasty way is to get the most from all your citrus fruits by using the zest, the brightly colored top layer of peel.

Tangy citrus zest is a natural antioxidant. It's also a "free" food, because it has practically zero calories, yet is full of flavor thanks to the [natural oils](#) that give grapefruit, oranges, lemons and others their strong scents. Unlike the underlying white pith, the zest is not bitter.

The best way to zest? Pick up an inexpensive super-slim microplane. The tiny grater holes create a fine zest when you run the fruit along its length. They stay sharp, plus the tool is dishwasher safe (though a quick rinse might be all it needs after use).

Choose organic citrus to avoid ingesting any pesticides that can linger on the peel. Wash the whole fruit under cold running water, then carefully shave off the fragrant skin, stopping short of the pith.

Mix zest with olive oil and minced garlic for a savory, fresh-tasting marinade for chicken. Make flavored cooking oil by stirring citrus zest into a beaker of extra-virgin olive oil. Use zest to enhance baked goods—cut the sugar in traditional recipes by half, then add a teaspoon of zest to add unique flavor.

Zest is also a great way to finish off your favorite sauteed vegetables along with a squeeze of juice. This lemony spinach recipe makes a great side with no added salt, especially good for anyone looking to limit their sodium intake.

Citrus Spinach

- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin [olive oil](#)
- 6 cups baby spinach
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon or lime zest
- 4 teaspoons fresh lemon or lime juice

Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, [spinach](#) and zest. Cook one

to two minutes, turning leaves until they wilt. Add the juice, stir once more and serve.

Yield: 2 side-dish servings

More information: The USDA has everything you need to know about [limes](#), lemons and other citrus fruits.

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