

Secrets to Making Limoncello as a Gift



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A very common use of Limoncello is to give it as a homemade gift to family and friends. This is a great idea because it's something you can readily make at home, it's not too expensive, it's personal and it can be made to look very attractive.

As an enthusiast, I make plenty of limoncello that I wouldn't consider giving as a gift for one reason or another. Making a batch of limoncello for gift-giving has a special set of considerations so I wanted to make this guide for you would-be gift givers out there.

When making limoncello as a gift, the priorities are to make it attractive, palatable to a wide audience and relatively inexpensive. Use my [standard limoncello recipe](#) with the following important alterations.

1) This is THE SECRET to making limoncello as a gift – use the highest proof alcohol you can get your hands on. I realize this is contradictory to what I have said elsewhere but there are several reasons for this. For one, it helps you reduce the time of infusion and maximize the effect of the oils from the lemon zest. This significantly reduces the time it takes to make the limoncello and makes the finished product smell and taste better. High-proof alcohol such as 190 proof Everclear is also more cost effective on a dollar-per-ounce-of-pure-alcohol basis because it isn't meant to be consumed in its raw form so the manufacturer doesn't have to bother filtering it like they would an 80-proof vodka. They also spend little on marketing, as you can see if you ever check out one of their labels. The only caution with using high proof alcohol is that you need to scale the simple syrup to the higher alcohol content using the [calculator](#). If you can't get grain alcohol in your area, check online. Be sure to follow all your local laws regarding liquor.

2) Shoot for an alcohol percentage on the low end because more people will like sipping a gift of limoncello that doesn't scorch your tonsils. Something in the 25-30% range is a good target.

3) Filter, filter, filter. For gift giving I recommend additional filtrations of the liquor before infusion (6 or 7 if you have the patience). I also recommend additional paper coffee filtrations, as many as 4 if you can stand that. This makes the limoncello smooth, which nearly everyone likes. It also makes the finished product appear clearer and prevents a film from forming on the top, which is normal but probably the last thing you want in a gift.

4) Apply your own [label](#). There are a number of ways to do this. Some folks with the skills can make their own or you can buy nice ones from templates online. Remember to put a little caption that says "Gift only, not for resale" or something to that effect. This makes it clear to the government that you're not trying to sell alcohol. The authorities are very serious about alcohol laws, don't disregard this.

5) Put it in a custom-looking [bottle](#). When I give limoncello as a gift I always buy bottles that look the part. There are a wide variety to choose from. Sometimes I find bottles I like at Crate & Barrel or other retailers, but I usually order them online because it's just easier and the selection is really good.

6) Give small bottles. This probably goes without saying, but I don't usually give 750ml bottles as gifts. Most people don't drink limoncello in massive quantities, a little goes a long way. I usually use 200ml or 250ml bottles, sometimes even nip sized bottles.

7) Put your own spin on the limoncello. If you experiment a little beforehand, you can probably find an ingredient to add to the infusion process that makes the limoncello your own. Just a hint is good, so people say "what is that flavor? I like it." Herbs like rosemary, mint or basil are good for this. Personally I use pineapple.

