

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**Citrus Perks Up Winter Meals**  
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Citrus, especially lemon, is such a bright, vibrant flavor that it is perfect to liven things up in the middle of winter. With gray skies outside it brings a little sunshine to the kitchen. And it just happens that citrus is in season during this time of year.

When I was in college we had a home economics house. Unless you were married or lived with your family in town, all students lived in the dorms at my school. So the “house” was a residence off campus that the senior home economics majors lived in for six weeks and learned to manage a household, plan and prepare meals and entertain guests. You would spend one week doing each job such as being the cook, the hostess, the host, the server, etc. So a couple of years ago I was searching through some old boxes of stored papers and ran across a recipe box from my time in the house. One of my housemates had made this



recipe for Lemon Almond Chicken for dinner one night and the recipe had been tucked away. So I decided to try it again and wow - I am so glad I was reconnected with this dish. The lemon sauce is sweet and tart over the browned chicken and the almonds add a crunchy topping. Perfect for a weeknight dinner or special enough for a Valentine date night.

Fresh lemon juice is best. I usually use a lemon squeezer which is a metal hinged tool that you put the cut lemon in and manually squeeze together to extract the juice. It works well at getting a lot of juice without the seeds or a lot of pulp. I also have a manual wooden reamer that you rotate into the flesh of the cut lemon and it extracts the juice but sometimes with seeds and a lot more of the pulp. Both of these tools work well, or you can squeeze them by hand or with an electric juicer. A lot of the flavor of citrus is found in the outer peel. If your recipe calls for the zest, use a microplane or fine grater to remove just the thin layer of colored peel on the outside as the white pith underneath is very bitter. If you like a strong citrus flavor, add the zest to a recipe for an extra punch along with the juice. Just make sure you zest before you cut and squeeze your fruit.

Citrus fruits come in all sizes and some are juicier than others. So it’s not always easy to know exactly how much juice a lemon will yield. The general rule of thumb is about 3 tablespoons of juice per lemon, 2 tablespoons per lime and about 5 tablespoons per orange.

So perk up your meals this dreary winter month with a little ray of sunshine in the form of citrus juice.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)).

## **Lemon Almond Chicken**

10 tablespoons lemon juice  
6 tablespoons Dijon style mustard  
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil, divided  
6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts  
1 cup sliced almonds  
2 cups chicken broth  
1 teaspoon cornstarch dissolved in 1 T water  
2 tablespoons lemon or orange marmalade  
2 tablespoons butter, cut into cubes  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flake  
Lemon slices for garnish

In a medium bowl, whisk together lemon juice, mustard, garlic and pepper. Add 10 tablespoons of the oil. Pour half of the marinade into a gallon zip top bag and reserve remaining marinade. Add the chicken breasts to the bag, turning to coat. Place in a bowl and marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour. In a large skillet, toast the almonds in 1/2 tablespoon oil until golden. Remove almonds from pan and wipe out with a paper towel. Drain the chicken, discarding the marinade. Cook in skillet with remaining tablespoon of oil until browned and just cooked through, about 10 minutes. Remove chicken to a platter and add reserved marinade to pan with chicken broth and cornstarch. Cook over high heat, stirring occasionally until sauce reduces by slightly more than 1/2, about 5 minutes. Add marmalade and stir until melted. Add butter, parsley and red pepper flakes. Return chicken to pan and heat through. Remove to platter and pour sauce over top. Sprinkle with almonds and garnish with lemon slices.