

## **Portable, powdered, effervescent. S(n)ippets of lemonade at the Australian table 1806 – 1906**

### **October 2026**

CONFECTIONARY.

No. 40,  
(Near the Back Gate of Government House)  
On the East side of Back Row,  
The Public are respectfully assured of  
a constant supply of the choicest delicacies  
ever before offered to their notice ;  
among which are the following :  
Sirop de Citron and Lemonade in pint  
and quart bottles, in no wise inferior  
to the best Sirop de Capellaire.<sup>1</sup>

Published in 1806 this is the earliest reference to lemonade in Australia I found. Its comparison to Sirop de Citron and Sirop de Capellaire<sup>2</sup> suggests that lemonade here was also a syrup. It was likely a concentration of lemon juice, sugar and water.

I've been a fan of lemonade as an icy pole, an aerated drink, and a mixer with beer as a shandy. With summer, the season of icy poles, coming up now seems a good time to have a look at the story of lemonade at the Australian table.

I look at the first 100 years of 1806 – 1906 stepping out from that at times to flesh out a topic.

### **Imports of lemonade**

In 1831 Dawes & Co. imported 4 casks of lemonade.<sup>3</sup> Also in 1831 Samuel Lyons had 30 dozen lemonade casks to auction.<sup>4</sup> In 1835 Lemon syrup, for punch acid, or lemonade, in 1 dozen cases were on sale.<sup>5</sup> The 1831 sales were also likely to have been lemonade syrup.

I could find no information on who would have purchased this lemonade.

In 1860 Dangar, Gilchrist, and co. exported 1 case of lemonade.<sup>6</sup>

### **Earliest domestic lemonade recipe**

In 1864 Edward Abbott published the first domestic recipe for lemonade. 'A very wholesome and excellent cooling drink in hot weather; none more healthful'.

Lemonade – Take sixteen lemons, pare them, cut in halves, squeeze well, and throw them into a pan; ass a pound and a half of white sugar, a gallon of boiling water, and a wine-glass of sherry wine. Mix, strain, and cool.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CONFECTIONARY. No. 40, The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 1 June 1806 p.3

<sup>2</sup> A syrup made from Maidenhair fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris*.

<sup>3</sup> Sydney General Trade List, The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 22 September 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Sale By Auction, The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 29 September 1831 p.4

<sup>5</sup> Wines, Spirits, &c, The Tasmanian 18 December 1935 p.

<sup>6</sup> Exports, Empire 2 January 1860 p.4

<sup>7</sup> Abbott, Edward, *The English and Australian Cookery Book. Cookery for the Many As Well the "Upper Ten Thousand"*, Sampson, Low, Son & Marston London 1864 pp. 269 - 270

### **Commercial portable lemonade**

In 1826 'portable lemonade' was advertised.<sup>8</sup> This was a concoction made from sugar, lemon essence, and citric/tartaric acid to be added to water and drunk. It was convenient for householders, travellers and for taking on picnics.

### **Domestic portable lemonade**

Portable lemonade was likely also being made in the home. There is a recipe for Rased Lemon Sherbet or Portable Lemonade in British cookery book author Maria Rundell's 1816 '*A new system of domestic cookery*'.<sup>9</sup> There is a recipe for Excellent Portable Lemonade in Eliza Acton's 1845 *Modern Cookery for Private Families*.<sup>10</sup> Both books would have been circulating in the colonies.

Both use lemons and not lemon essence as in this, the earliest Australian recipe I found for Potable Lemonade in 1910.

#### **PORTABLE LEMONADE**

Take of tartaric acid one half  
ounce, refined sugar three ounces,  
essence of lemon half a drachm.  
Pound the tartaric acid and sugar  
very well in a marble mortar, and  
gradually pour the essence upon the  
mixture. Mix the whole very well,  
and paper it up for use in 12 separate  
parcels; each of which, when mixed  
with a tumbler of water, will make a  
very pleasant and refreshing draught.<sup>11</sup>

### **Public Consumption**

In 1827 the Colonial Times reported:

We strolled into his little shop the other day, and were surprised to see it full of officers and ladies, who were wearing away the tedious hours, by nibbling the sweet and savory paste, and sipping lemonade.<sup>12</sup>

In 1910 Ponds advertised its 'American Fountain Drinks – Lemonade, Spiders, Ginger Ale Cream Squash ...'<sup>13</sup>

### **Lemonade factory**

William Green in 1835 advertised that he had 'commenced business' manufacturing 'Soda Water, Lemonade and Ginger Beer'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. A. Tawell, The Australian 11 November 1826 p.1

<sup>9</sup> Newling, Jacqui, Eat Your History. Stories and recipes from Australian Kitchens, Sydney Living Museums, The Mint and NewSouth, 2015 p. 237

<sup>10</sup> Newling, J. in Silenger-Morris, Samantha, Colonial Cordials, The Sydney Morning Herald 24 April 2012

<sup>11</sup> Portable Lemonade, Cookery, The Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural, and Pastoral Gazette 22 October 1910 p.3

<sup>12</sup> Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser 17 August 1827 p.2

<sup>13</sup> Ponds, The Northern Advertiser 1 January 1910

<sup>14</sup> Soda Water, The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 14 April 1835 p.1

## **Aerated lemonade**

In 1832 James M’Naughton advertised that he was selling effervescent lemonade.<sup>15</sup> Effervescent drinks are carbonated i. e. carbon has been used in its manufacture making the drink bubbly.

Jacob Schweppes was the first to develop a system for aerating drinks in 1783. Aerating is done by the introducing air during its manufacture which also makes the drink bubbly. Schweppes launched Aerated Lemonade in Australia in 1835.<sup>16</sup>

In 1840 J. C. Russell advertised that he was manufacturing ‘Soda Water, and Aerated Lemonade ... which is manufactured on Schweppe’s peculiar principal.’<sup>17</sup>

## **Health Benefits of Lemonade**

One of the earliest references to lemonade was its purported health benefits.

In 1820 it was promoted for easing the effects of the ‘fever of Batavia’.

Water gruel is its chiefest cure (for the fever of Batavia); a dark room, total tenderness of deportment, and gentle acids, such as weak lemonade which will cool, heal, and prevent the painful cough. tenderness of deportment, and gentle acids, such as weak lemonade, which will cool, heal, and prevent the painful cough.<sup>18</sup>

In 1850 Sparkling Champagne Lemonade ‘a delicious summer beverage ... manufactured after the recipes of the most eminent physicians of London’ as a ‘safe, healthy, and refreshing drink’.<sup>19</sup>

In 1956 Diabetic Lemonade was advertised.<sup>20</sup>

## **Temperance and lemonade**

In 1840 the Temperance Coffee House in Launceston advertised that people ‘may be supplied with Tea, Coffee and other refreshments throughout the day ... Lemonade 6d per glass...’<sup>21</sup>

Coffee Houses and Hotels were established by Temperance organisations to provide an alternative accommodation for men than public houses. In 1905 the Colac Herald published a recipe for a Temperance Drink.

Pineapple -Take a tin of pineapples,  
cut the pine into slices, and pour over it  
a quart of hot water. When all the  
goodness has been extracted, strain off  
the liquid, sweeten to taste, and add the  
syrup from the tin, also two bottles of  
Lemonade. When cold, it is ready for

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<sup>15</sup> James M’Naughton, The Australian 9 October 1832 p.2

<sup>16</sup> About Us | Schweppes 2026

<sup>17</sup> J. C. Russell, The Australian 8 January 1840 p.1

<sup>18</sup> Sydney, The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 19 August 1820 p.3

<sup>19</sup> Messrs Winter & Co., South Australian Register 9 January 1850 p.1

<sup>20</sup> Punshon Bros., King Island News 14 March 1956

<sup>21</sup> Temperance Coffee House, Launceston Advertiser 2 April 1840 p.1

use.<sup>22</sup>

### **Lemonade at a picnic**

Port Victor.

On Tuesday, December 25, the annual picnic in connection with Newland Memorial Church was held on Granite Island, between 400 and 500 persons being present. The Committee, assisted by the ladies, had made extensive arrangements to supply the want of a large number. Ducks, geese, pigs, &c had been slaughtered by the dozens; pastry of every imaginable kind was prepared, and the liquids embraced tea, coffee, gingerbeer, and lemonade.<sup>23</sup>

### **Lemonade Powder**

Lemonade was also sold in powder form.

Russell & Co. ... Genuine Seidlitz, Ginger Beer, and Lemonade powders.<sup>24</sup>

In 1914 a recipe was given for making lemonade powder.

#### **LEMONADE POWDERS.**

Simple lemonades and lemon syrups are so easily made from fresh fruit or essence, that many Households prefer to prepare them in this fashion. Some, however, may like a recipe for making lemonade powder which to a glass of water makes a drink of lemonade that is ready in a moment, for these you only need 1 oz of powdered tartaric or citric acid, 6 oz of powdered sugar, and 2 drachms of essence of lemon. Mix these well, and let them dry in the sun. Then rub together very thoroughly, and divide into twenty-four equal parts. Make these up in white papers, fold over carefully, and put away in a well closed jar. The powders must be kept airtight and perfectly dry until they are required.<sup>25</sup>

### **Lemonade mixes**

Over the years lemonade has been mixed with other foodstuffs.

#### **MILK LEMONADE**

Put a pint of milk into a saucepan, with the thinly-cut rind of two lemons, and let it simmer for a quarter of an hour. Squeeze the juice of the lemons into a

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<sup>22</sup> Pineapple, Home Made Temperance Drinks, The Colac Herald 6 January 1905 p.7

<sup>23</sup> Port Victor, South Australian Register 3 January 1870 p.3

<sup>24</sup> Russell & Co, Geelong Advertiser 1848 31 October p.1

<sup>25</sup> Lemonade Powder, The Farmer and Settler 10 November 1914 p.5

jug, add two tablespoonfuls of castor sugar, and, after letting the milk reach boiling point, pour it into the jug containing the lemon juice; stir well, and leave until it is perfectly cold. Then strain through muslin and add two tablespoonfuls of orange flower water. This is a very refreshing and nourishing Summer beverage.<sup>26</sup>

#### APPLE LEMONADE.

Dice the apples without peeling and cook till tender in sufficient water to cover. Strain carefully, through a jelly bag is best, afterwards adding a cupful of sugar to each cup of juice. Bring to boil, and then cool. For each glass of apple lemonade use half a cup of the apple juice, the juice of half a lemon, and water and ice to fill the glass. If you want a dainty finish, serve with a candied cherry floating on top.<sup>27</sup>

#### ALMOND LEMONADE

ALMOND lemonade makes a change from the ordinary lemonade, and is an extremely refreshing drink. Boil in a quart of water the thinly pared yellow part of the rind of two lemons, and the juice squeezed from them, 2oz. ground sweet almonds, loz. bitter almonds and 1lb. loaf sugar. Simmer for about Vi-hour, then strain and allow to cool. Soda water may be added, if liked.<sup>28</sup>

#### Lemonade Sets

Lemonade has had its own drinking sets. In 1826 'Lemonade cups, richly cut' were advertised.<sup>29</sup> In 1938 amongst the gifts for a wedding couple were a 'Royal Doulton dinner service and a crystal lemonade set'.<sup>30</sup> In 1941 crockery set of a lemonade jug and four tumblers was advertised designed by Eric Ravilious for Wedgwood, hand-painted in green, yellow, pink and purple lustre.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Milk Lemonade, The Telegraph 9 December 1905 p.3

<sup>27</sup> Apple Lemonade, The Dandenong Journal 5 January 1933 p.5

<sup>28</sup> Almond Lemonade, Cool Drinks For Hot Weather, The Sun News-Pictorial 4 January 1938 p.36

<sup>29</sup> Mr. D. Ker, Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser 25 February 1825 p.4

<sup>30</sup> Freeman-McVeigh Wedding, The Evening News 12 January 1938 p.8

<sup>31</sup> Divine Artistry, The Central Queensland Herald 11 January 1940 p.27

**Closing words**

This has been an exploration of lemonade in Australia from 1806 - 1906. Over that time, it has gone from a syrup to an aerated product. Once proposed for its purported health benefits it became better enjoyed as a refreshing drink.