

The Lemon-and-Lime Line: I. Appeal for Data

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Abstract. A socio-geographical boundary, the Lemon-and-Lime Line, is defined, and an appeal is made for data with which to map it accurately.

During the course of oceanographic travels, I have been struck by the fact that, while in some parts of the world people garnish gin-and-tonic with a piece of lime, in other parts they choose lemon. It is my impression that these differing tastes are nearly everywhere uncompromising and irreconcilable; and indeed, that there exists a distinct, socio-geographic demarcation between the two regions — more deeply rooted in the Social Order than even the Prime Meridian — which I have tentatively called the "Lemon-and-Lime Line". No doubt there are compelling and intriguing cultural reasons for this division, but it seems prudent to defer theoretical investigation until the Line has been mapped with at least fair accuracy. Observations available to me at present, for example, are inadequate even to tell whether the Lime-Preferential and Lemon-Preferential Regions are simply or multiply connected. Nor am I at all sure that the Line is everywhere a line: somewhere it may be only a smudge.

The purpose of this note is not, therefore, to speculate, but to report observations of preference that colleagues and I have made, and to solicit additional data from other curious travelers. Mapping the Lemon-and-Lime Line accurately over the globe will evidently be a large enough task to require a collective effort. Our existing observations of geographical preference, listed in Table 1, could at the very least stand verification.

Table 1. Observations of Preference for Lemon and Lime

<u>Country</u>	<u>Preferred Garnish</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Canada	Lime	
United States:		
Contiguous U.S.	Lime	Sampling in more than thirty states.
College Station, Texas	Lemon wedges	Unexplained exception in certain Aggie bars.
Alaska		
Anchorage	Lime	
Adak	Lemon	Usually.
Hawaii	Lemon	
Puerto Rico	Lime	Thorough sampling.
Bermuda	Lime	
Mexico	Lime	Pronounced lemon.
Costa Rica	Lime	
Panama	Lemon	Lime often available on request.
Venezuela	Lemon	Spot-sampling near Hilton Hotels.
Curacao	Lime	Extensive sampling.
Ecuador	—	Beyond the pale: an order for gin-and- tonic brought gin-and-7-Up.
Brazil	Mixed	Only lime in Recife.
Argentina	Lime	Only Buenos Aires investigated.
Chile:		
Major cities	Either	Lemon most common.
Punta Arenas	Occasionally lemon	Usually neither available.
Puerto Williams	Neither	Gin not common (!)
England	Lime	
Switzerland	Non-uniform	Cantonal preferences: lime in Geneva, lemon in Zurich.
Italy	Lemon	Pronounced limone. Lime required by expatriates in La Spezia.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Preferred Garnish</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Soviet Union:		
Moscow and Leningrad	Usually neither	Gin available only in "hard-currency" tourist bars.
Yalta and environs	Lime	Tourist bars only.
Turkey	Lemon	Studies only in Istanbul.
Kenya	Either	Noisy data.
South Africa	Lime	
South West Africa (Namibia)	Lime	Usually. Lemon also available in Swakopmund, where much that is unexpected is found.
Seychelles	Lime	Exceptionally enjoyable at Northolme Hotel.
Mauritius	Lemon	Except at Le Chaland Hotel, which caters to a British clientele, and serves lime.
Sri Lanka	Lime	Sampling in Colombo only.
Australia	Lime	Repeated sampling.
New Zealand	Lemon	(!) Adamantly.
Fiji	Lime	
New Caledonia	Lime preferred, often lemon	Lime pronounced lemon or citron, lemon pronounced citron.
Japan	Lemon	
South Korea	Lemon	Sampling limited to Seoul.

The geographical distribution of data is obviously fragmentary and uneven. The coverage of the Americas, of the Pacific, and of the Indian Ocean is not bad, but there are only three observations for Africa, and only one for all of the Asian Mainland. It is regrettable, moreover, that Europe, Cradle of Western Civilization, should have received so little attention to date.

Nevertheless, important questions are posed by the data already in hand. Why, for example, is New Zealand so anomalous among its neighbors in the South Pacific? Why are Brazil and Kenya so indecisive in their allegiances? And, while the Line appears to pass between Adak and the Alaskan Mainland, at what longitude do ships plying from California to Hawaii switch from lime to lemon?

Clearly more data are needed, and I am appealing herewith to other oceanographers (and anyone else, for that matter) to send me their own observations of local preferences for lemon vs. lime, in order that a well documented map of the Lemon-and-Lime Line may eventually be prepared. It seems doubtful that the importance of this project would warrant color-printing of the resulting map in electric green and yellow, but even a black-and-white version should prove stimulating to sociologists, theoreticians, and bon vivants.

Acknowledgements: I am indebted for some field data to certain colleagues who probably wish to remain anonymous. This research has not been supported by the Office of Naval Research.