

# Lime Oil: Another Reason to Love Lime

Sailors and explorers never set sail without crates of lime on board, as its vitamin C-loaded juice served as one of the most potent remedies for scurvy and other skin problems.<sup>1</sup> Now, lime is more popularly used as a cooking ingredient, adding a tangy flavor to your favorite dishes. But there's another great way to reap its benefits: use lime oil. Get to know the many uses of this invigorating and refreshing citrus oil.

## What Is Lime Oil?

Lime oil comes from *Citrus aurantifolia* of the Rutaceae plant family.<sup>2</sup> This evergreen tree is short and bushy, growing between 6 and 13 feet high (much smaller than orange or grapefruit trees), and has dark green leaves, white blossoms, and green oval fruits.<sup>3</sup> There are two main types of lime trees: the Mexican lime (Key lime) and the Tahiti lime (Persian or Bearss lime).

Lime is indigenous to Southeast Asia and then spread to Egypt and Africa. The Moors also introduced lime to Spain during the 1200s and became a widely used fruit throughout Europe before it reached American shores. Today, the largest producer of lime is India (16 percent), followed by Mexico (14.5 percent), Argentina (10 percent), Brazil (8 percent), and Spain (7 percent).<sup>4</sup>

Lime oil has a sharp citrus scent, and is either pale yellow or light olive in color depending on how it was produced. Although it's traditionally used as a flavoring agent in food, there are other well-known uses for it.

## Uses of Lime Oil

Lime oil has been extensively used in the food and beverage industry, as well as in making fragrances. This versatile citrus oil is also added to household cleaners, detergents, soaps, and other beauty products.

You can also get body-wide benefits by using lime oil in aromatherapy, as it is stimulating and refreshing. Just like lemon oil, lime oil can be used for its cleansing properties. Its rich vitamin C content also makes it an ideal immune system booster, helping protect you from colds and flu.

There are multiple ways to use lime oil, depending on what health condition you want to treat or address:<sup>5</sup>

- **You can relieve stress, exhaustion, and anxiety, or calm your mind** by diffusing a few drops using a vaporizer. This also helps boost your immune system, especially after an illness. You can add it to your bathwater as well.
- **For colds, coughs, sinusitis, sore throat, and chest congestion**, add a few drops to a bowl of steaming water and inhale it. You can also mix a few drops with a carrier oil, then rub it on your neck and chest.
- **If you have rheumatism and arthritis**, put two to three drops in an ounce of carrier oil, then massage on the affected areas regularly. This method also works for cellulite and varicose veins.

- **Treat bleeding cuts and wounds** by putting two drops in a cold compress and pressing it on the affected areas.
- **For acne and other skin problems**, mix two drops of lime oil with 15 drops of jojoba oil and apply onto your skin. This helps wash out impurities while promoting the growth of new skin cells.
- **Avoid dandruff and bring life to dull, frizzy, or oily hair** by mixing a few drops of lime oil in your favorite shampoo. Lime can help remove oil quickly while moisturizing your scalp from within.<sup>6</sup>

Don't just leave lime oil in your medicine cabinet, though. Around the home, lime oil can help:<sup>7 8</sup>

- **Remove grease spots and sticker residue.** Put lime oil on a cotton pad and use it to wipe surfaces clean. It also helps remove gum and can be used to clean a dry erase board.
- **Prevent fruits from turning brown.** Add one to two drops to your fruits.
- **Repel insect, such as mosquitoes and ants.** Simply diffuse it in your home.
- **Add flavor to your citrus-infused dishes.** Add a few drops for a deeper, tangy flavor.

## Composition of Lime Oil

Like lemons, limes and lime essential oil are full of antioxidants and other beneficial nutrients.<sup>9</sup> Lime oil is loaded with terpene hydrocarbons, such as a-pinene, b-pinene, d-pinene, camphene, sabinene, and terpinolene. It also contains oxygenated compounds like a-terpineol, 1,8-cineole, 1,4-cineole, linalool, and fenchol, as well as sesquiterpenes. It also contains traces of neral acetate and geranyl acetate.<sup>10</sup> Germacrene B, another component of lime oil, is an important fragrance element in lime oil, giving it a sweet, woody-spicy, geranium-like note that makes it distinguishable from lemon oil.<sup>11 12</sup>

## Benefits of Lime Oil

Tetanus can be spread through wounds inflicted by rusty iron objects. Did you know that lime oil can be used to treat such injuries?<sup>13</sup> Just like the fruit, lime oil is chock-full of benefits, owing to its rich antioxidant and nutrient content. It's a great oil to add to your natural first-aid kit.

Lime oil can:<sup>14</sup>

- **Cure both internal and external infections.** It can help prevent wounds from being infected, as well as help cure infections of the throat, colon, mouth, intestines, stomach, and urinary system. It can also help heal or relieve skin problems such as sores, rashes, psoriasis, gangrene, open ulcers, and carbuncles.
- **Relieve respiratory disorders.** It can help treat bronchitis and is effective against viral infections like flu, coughs, colds, mumps, and measles.
- **Cure toothaches and promote good oral health.** It strengthens the grip of the gumsto prevent tooth loss. .
- **Help kill bacteria that cause** diarrhea, food poisoning, cholera, and typhoid. It also helps treat internal and external bacterial infections.

- **Help stop bleeding.** It contracts blood vessels and promotes coagulation. This also helps reduce your risk of hemorrhages.
- **Detoxify your liver.** Taken internally, it can serve as an important component of a detox regimen and promote liver health.[15](#)

## How to Make Lime Oil

There are two ways by which lime oil is produced: cold-pressing and distilling. Cold-pressed oil has a yellow or green color, with a rich and fresh lime peel aroma. Meanwhile, distilled is either pale yellow or clear, with a fragrant fruity scent.

Between these two, I would recommend using cold-pressed lime oil, as it retains more of the natural elements that make lime oil so beneficial. Even though cold-pressed lime oil costs more than distilled varieties, it's definitely worth the money.[16](#) You can also make a basic lime oil infusion at home with these easy steps:[17](#)

### Materials:

2 cups olive oil  
4 limes  
Citrus zester or paring knife  
2 Kaffir lime leaves (optional)  
Fine-mesh sieve

### Procedure:

1. Heat two cups of olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat. While doing this, wash the limes and dry them thoroughly.
2. Using the paring knife or zester, cut the lime zest into quarter-inch strips. Do not cut into the pith, though.
3. Add the lime zest and two Kaffir lime leaves (if using) to the olive oil. Allow to simmer for 10 minutes over medium heat.
4. Remove the saucepan from heat and then cover, allowing the zest and leaves to steep for 2 1/2 hours.
5. Using the fine-mesh sieve, store the oil in an airtight and non-reactive storage container. You can leave the zest in the mixture as a garnish. Store it in a cool, dry place. No need for refrigeration.

This lime oil infusion can be used for up to two weeks.

## How Does Lime Oil Work?

According to a 2003 study on the aromatic volatiles in key lime essential oils, the components geranial, neral, and linalool are dominant in lime oil, contributing to its fresh and citrus aroma. These components also contribute to the oil's astringent, tonic, antiseptic, antiviral, antimicrobial, restorative, stimulant, and other health-promoting properties.<sup>18</sup>

To ensure the shelf life of your lime oil, keep it in a cool, dark place, away from sunlight.

## Is Lime Oil Safe?

Lime oil can be inhaled or vaporized, used topically, or added to food in small amounts. It's said to be non-toxic and non-irritating, but this does not mean that you should use it recklessly.<sup>19</sup> For instance, do a patch test to see if you have any sensitivity to this oil. Simply apply a drop or two to your skin to check if you develop any allergic reaction.

I do not recommend using undiluted lime oil, as it can be very potent. Instead, blend it with a milder oil, such as coconut oil or olive oil. Lime oil also blends well with lavender, neroli, ylang-ylang, and clary sage.<sup>20</sup>

As with other herbal oils, I advise you to consult your physician before ingesting this oil (diluted or mixed in food) to determine the proper dosage for your condition. I also do not recommend lime oil for pregnant women or nursing mothers without first seeking the advice of their healthcare provider.

## Side Effects of Lime Oil

Citrus oils like lime oil are photosensitive, meaning they react to light, radiant energy, or other sources of UV rays. If you use this oil topically and then go out into the sun or other light

sources, an adverse reaction such as a rash or dark pigmentation may appear after several minutes, hours, or days after the light exposure.

So whatever happens, don't expose your skin to the sun if you've just used lime oil. Wait for six to 24 hours before going out. The stronger the UV rays that you will be exposed to, the longer the wait should be.<sup>21</sup>