

Amelie's Candied Peels Orange, Grapefruit, Lemon

Take orange, lemon, or grapefruit peel, cut into pieces as desired, and soak in water several days, changing the water every day. You may soak grapefruit longer than orange, but do not soak more than 1 week or they will mold. Then in fresh water simmer them for a quarter hour, drain, repeat, and let dry overnight. And if they be grapefruit, simmer with fresh water 3 times.

Now weigh your peels, then take an equal weight of honey or sugar, put peels in a pot and cover with the honey, then boil over a low fire and stir. If you overcook them they will be bitter. When the peels have absorbed the honey, lay them out to dry. And you may roll them in powdered spices with sugar after — ginger is best with grapefruit and cinnamon with orange.

Note also you do not have to let the peels dry overnight, and if you leave them to dry too long they will not absorb the honey. If you use sugar instead of honey, they will not keep more than one month. [If you put them away too moist they will mold, and if you let them dry they get hard like rocks.] I like half honey half sugar best.

If you try mandarin or lime, only soak 1 or 2 days, only boil once, and do not dry overnight.

There are many medieval and renaissance candied peel recipes — I read and tried multiple before I settled on this as my favorite way. Earlier medieval recipes use honey; by late renaissance they are using sugar instead. I cannot justify using half and half as a period method, but I like it because when it's all honey I feel that there is too much honey flavor, whereas my peels don't keep if I use all sugar. With half and half I get the preservative benefits of the honey without it overpowering the fruit flavor. Most all the period recipes call for equal weight sugar and fruit, however the 13th century Andalusian calls for 3 times as much honey in it's fruit leathers! - I guess that won't spoil, but no thanks.

I won't write out the period recipes here, but will give a list of the ones I know I consulted. Of course you can find more than these.

Anonymous Andalusian (13c Spain)
Menagier de Paris (14c French)
Libro per Cuoco (15c Italian)
Nostradamus (16c English)
Martha Washington (17c English)
Fanny Farmer (19c American)
Joy of Cooking (20c American)