

THE  
PERSIAN PANTRY  
LIMES

Fresh and dried limes are an abiding source of acid. Aromatic Persian limes, the type that's commonly found in the produce section, appear in salads, fish dishes, and all manner of *sharbats* (sweet drinks), while dried limes (*limu omani*) are used in soups and stews. Dried limes are available at [kalustyans.com](http://kalustyans.com), or substitute quartered fresh ones.

**\*  
SPARKLING SOUR  
CHERRY APERITIVO**

**MAKES 6** We call this a Persian *Kir Royale*—and can think of no better way to start a meal. This recipe yields more syrup than you'll need; use the surplus for fruity nonalcoholic spritzers or drizzle it over ice cream.

**SOUR CHERRY SYRUP** Purée one 24-oz. jar sour cherries in light syrup (with syrup) in a blender until smooth. Strain into a medium bowl, pressing to extract as much liquid as possible. Bring cherry mixture and 1 cup sugar to a boil in a large saucepan, stirring to

dissolve sugar; reduce heat and simmer, occasionally skimming any foam from surface, until reduced to 1½ cups, 20–30 minutes. Let cool. Mix in 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice. Cover; chill until cold, about 2 hours. **DO AHEAD:** Syrup can be made 1 month ahead. Keep chilled.

**COCKTAILS** Divide 3 Tbsp. chilled sour cherry syrup among 6 glasses. Top off syrup with one 750-ml bottle of chilled sparkling wine, dividing evenly, and stir to combine. Garnish drinks with lemon verbena or mint sprigs, if desired.