

How To Start A Fire With A Lemon

The first thing that comes to mind when reading a title like the one above is: are you serious?

I mean, what do lemons and making a fire could possibly have in common? The simple answer is: from a scientific point of view, quite a lot. Now, as far as survival tips go, being capable of starting a fire in adverse conditions is one of the most important skills a prepper could master. Fire is what separated us from animals, if you come to think about it.

Fire kept us safe from big predators, warm during cold winters, cooked our high-protein foods, which contributed to our big-brain development, and also enabled us to create better weapons via metallurgy, followed by the industrial revolution (the steam engine rings a bell?) and all that. Fire is the corner stone of civilization.

Basically, fire was a gift from the Gods, as many myths claim (read Prometheus for example). Or, in this particular case, a gift from lemons. Now, one may argue that tropical fruits like lemons are pretty hard to find in the tundra. And yes, that's true. But not an argument. See, the argument would be that in a survival situation, one should take advantage of anything that's readily available and can be used for a practical purpose. Let's say you've just washed-up on a tropical island and you've lost all your gear. And there are lemons everywhere, and you could kill for a lemon-tea. You see where this is going, right?

My point is this: sometimes, when life throws lemons at you, don't just use them for lemonade, but for starting a big, beautiful fire.

To begin with, and to "cut to the chase", making fire with a

lemon is not actually possible, despite legendary YouTube clips claiming success in such endeavor.

I mean, in the best case scenario, you can't actually start a fire with a lemon per se. The trick is to turn a lemon (or a similar fruit, acidic that is) into a battery. I don't know about you, but I've learned about this concept back in the day, when I was young in a physics class: in order to build a battery, you'll require acid and copper/zinc electrodes. Acid? That sounds like a lemon, right

Everybody knows that lemon juice is acidic in nature.

So, here's a video that was widely circulated on the internet a while ago. Here's a guy who stuck some copper fasteners/zinc nails into a lemon, then he claimed he used the energy created in that weird way to start a fire by short-circuiting 2 wires. Check out the video and I will give you my impression on it afterwards:

As you can see for yourself, the video was an instant hit, gathering almost 25 million views.

The general rule of thumb is this: if you believe everything you read/see on the internet, stop using the internet. The video above claims that all you require for starting a fire is a lemon, 6 galvanized/zinc coated nails/clips, 6 copper clips, steel wool and a piece of wire. Now, it's already getting complicated hoarding all that gear in a survival scenario. I mean, when was the last time you had those items when you went out hiking? Think along the lines of fresh lemons, never mind a bunch of zinc/copper nails? It would make more sense to pack a BIC lighter and some matches inside your EDC survival kit, don't you think?

But let's forget about logistics for a second. The concept of making a battery from a lemon is not far-fetched. A lemon can be used for generating a very small amount of electricity.

That is plausible.

This is how it works: when 2 electrodes (the copper clips/zinc nails in our particular case) are placed inside an electrolyte (the lemon) and connected using a conductive material, electricity magically appears. The juice inside a lemon makes for a good electrolyte, and the copper clips/zinc nails stuck inside are connected in series to one another, while the ends are left free for wires to be attached. That's how lemons can be used to produce a small amount of electricity.

However, the problem with lemons, potatoes and any other fruit or veggie that can be used as a battery in a fun scientific experiment is that a lemon can only generate 0.001 amperes and 0.7 volts. To make a long and complicated story short, that's not enough "juice" to heat the wires in order to kindle a fire.

If you want to learn about hard-facts and lemons used as fire starters, well, here's a scientifically-approved video that debunks the claim about the magic-lemon:

So, yes, making fire with a lemon works, theoretically speaking.

Just like socialism. When you try to apply it in real-life, that's another matter altogether (see Venezuela). However, if you're a follower of the empirical method, don't take my word for it; just go on and try starting a fire with a lemon on your own, using the method described in the first video. And let us know about your success (or lack there of) in the comment section below.

I genuinely hope the article helped, as in it saved you from trying and failing at...you know. At least you had fun reading it, right?