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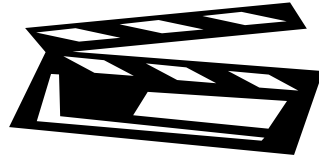
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## **Menton celebrates The Cinema**



### **A popular event**

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La Fête du Citron® (*Lemon Festival*), an unique event in the world, attracts more than 200,000 visitors every year –

The event has taken on a new life in the last years, by centring on heroes from the world of cartoons (Walt Disney) or comic-books such as Asterix (1997), Tintin (1998), Lucky Luke (1999), the french literature with the Fontaine Fables (2000), the Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault (2001), Pinocchio (2002), Alice in Wonderland (2003), cinema with Walt Disney Studios® (2004), an European country with Spain (2005) or “the carnivals of the world” with Brazil as guest of honour for 2006, India for 2007, the World’s Islands for 2008, the Musics of the World for 2009.and..., this year, **Menton celebrates the Cinema**

The number of people attending the Lemon Festival is constantly rising. The Festival is presented in the programmes of over 6,000 international tourism professionals. Visitors are getting younger and younger. The parades are equally attended by groups and individuals, whereas the exhibitions mainly attract individual visitors”.

### **No equivalent in the world**

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The Lemon Festival has no equivalent in the world. His originality lies in the use of citrus fruit for adorning the floats and monumental structures. In the Biovès gardens, the giant decorations made with lemons and oranges recount a new story each year in 11 scenes.

### **International coverage**

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Menton, known as “La Cité des Citrons” (*The City of Lemons*), is famous throughout the world for its festival. Every year, it attracts a cosmopolitan audience and is the focus of intensive media coverage worldwide.

The Lemon Festival commenced in the thirties. The lemon grown in the region of Menton is renowned for its quality. The city today is one of the main players in the region’s boosting of citrus fruit cultivation.

## **The Festival's Highlights**

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- **The Golden Citrus Parade:** (on Sundays, February 14, 21 & 28, 2010 at 2:30 pm)  
Ten citrus fruit-decorated floats - which will be seated charming young ladies will on - parade along Promenade du Soleil along the sea front. Between the floats, bands, folkloric groups, drum majorettes and marching bands a fantastic atmosphere will be created.  
**Two nights processions** on February 18 and 25.2009 at 8:30 pm will also be held, illuminating the city in festive lights, the apotheosis will be the grand display of fireworks on the bay!
- **The Biovès Gardens under the light!** On Friday February, 12, 19 & 26. 2010 and on tuesday February, 16 & 23 2010 from 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm.
- **The exhibitions and attractions** in :The Biovès Gardens will host the traditional citrus decorations. Somewhat like the twelve labours of Hercules, the fairy stories have inspired the city's artists to create monumental structures.  
The Palais de l'Europe will host, as every year :  
\* **The Orchid exhibition and the Arts and Crafts show.**  
This Arts and Crafts Show is an opportunity to show visitors the crafts inspired by citrus from the Menton region: a delight to the taste buds - jam, jelly, honey, liqueur, etc. - and the scented soap and perfume (L'Eau de Menton). There will also be crafts from the Menton region: wood carving, glass engraving, ceramics, miniature painting, flower-petal picture frames...
- **The attractions:** Every day, a brass band will sound through the streets of the city. Theatrical evenings are also scheduled at the Palais de l'Europe (the detailed programme in [www.feteducitron.com](http://www.feteducitron.com) ).

## **Menton participates**

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The Lemon Festival has a winning team, with more than 300 people involved: citrus-fruit growers, gardeners, artists, metal workers... The monumental metal structures which the lemons and oranges are placed by the City of Menton Department of Parks and Gardens are made by a local firm. 500,000 elastic bands and 145 metric tons of citrus are required for this titanic task!

## **Discovering the citrus**

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The Lemon Festival provides visitors with an opportunity for discovering the fascinating world of citrus. The Palais Carnolès garden has the largest citrus collection in Europe: grapefruit, lemon, kumquat, tangerine, clementine, Seville orange... The rarest varieties have been introduced, from the Chinese mandarin orange to the lemon of Sochi (citrus medica). During the Lemon Festival some guided tours will be organised by the Tourist Office of Menton (4\*).

# On the sidelines

*The Lemon Festival requires months of organising and involves more than 300 people who devote a total of 20,000 hours of work! Here is a glimpse of the preparations for the event.*

## **From models to metal “skeletons”** \_\_\_\_\_

The various stages in the event are perfectly synchronised. Once the models are selected, construction of the metal structures is entrusted to specialised metalworkers.

“The challenge is to realise steel structures that are both sturdy enough to support the weight of the fruit (one to three metric tons per float) and flexible enough to bend with the movement”. That’s reason why a total of nearly 15 metric tons are needed. The Lemon Festival keeps three to four persons busy for five months”.

In December, the Municipal Technical Centre starts building the stands for the parades and, with the help of an handling company erect the footbridge that joins the two areas of the Biovès gardens. They are also used for the Christmas celebration settings.

## **“Fruiting” the decorations and floats** \_\_\_\_\_

The City’s Department of Parks and Gardens takes care of collecting boxwood in the mountains and in the hinterland for the contours of the decorations.

The floats and decorations are covered with wire netting and 70 m<sup>3</sup> of boxwood are braided into garlands. Then the lemons and oranges are attached to the netting with elastic bands – yellow and orange so they don’t show too much. Its used to use wire, until one of the gardeners in the Department had the idea of elastic bands in 1960, which does not damage the fruit as much.

Covering 1 m<sup>2</sup> of wire netting requires 30 kg of fruit, nearly 200 lemons and oranges! (All the fruits: 145 metric tons) Wich are the worked begins in the early of February on. The elastic bands are imported from Taiwan, and 500,000 of them are needed!

During the two weeks of the Lemon Festival long, 20 people are involved to change rotten fruit every day.

## **From one festival to another** \_\_\_\_\_

When the Festival is over, the City’s Department of Parks and Gardens is left with a daunting task: He has to remove everything in five days. He has to redo the lawn in the Biovès gardens, and plant all the flowers again.

After the event, the citrus fruits which are still in a good condition are sold off at token prices, for the pleasure of those who like to make jam, syrup, orange wine, etc.

# Lemon Festival: A long story

*At the beginning of the 20th century, Menton created an new event. By the 1930s, the city tried to play on something more original, by introducing citrus decorations...*

## **A new event to liven the city up** \_\_\_\_\_

In 1895, a group of hoteliers, seeking a way of providing winter entertainment for the city, suggested to the municipality that there be a parade through the city. By 1896, this new event of Menton was as popular with the local population as with the rich winter visitors. At the time, it was fashionable to spend the winter months in the mild climate of the French Riviera. Kings, Queens, Princes, artists and performers stayed in the palaces of Menton, or had splendid villas built. The festival of 1882 was a memorable occasion, attended by Queen Victoria in person, and ending in a grandiose fireworks display on the Bay of Garavan.

The festival of Menton was then very similar to its cousin in Nice: a parade of "big heads", confetti-throwing, flower processions... the Mardi Gras parade leading to a bonfire to sacrifice His Majesty King... with merrymaking in the streets, feasting and all the extravagance characteristic of the revelry before the austere time of Lent.

## **The tradition of the "Moucouleti"** \_\_\_\_\_

On the evening of the second parade or Corso, the people of Menton enjoyed a traditional pastime, called "Moucouleti" or "Moccoletti" (for the small candles everyone held in their hands). The game involved keeping your own candle lit, while trying to blow out the others'! This game was often a pretext for amorous encounters, as recounted by Pierre Masséna: "Young men were expected to use the utmost dexterity in putting out a young woman's candle, who held it well lit high over her head. Often, after having succeeded in this feat, the young man could relight the charred wick, and receive a kiss in return."

## **And the lemon enters the scene** \_\_\_\_\_

In 1929, Menton was still the number one lemon-growing region in Europe. An hotelier had the excellent idea of organising an exhibition of flowers and citrus fruit in the gardens of the Hôtel Riviera. It was so successful that, the following year, the event moved into the streets, with carts covered with orange and lemon trees along with lovely local girls. Wishing to develop tourism, the municipality sought to give to this new event a typically local colour: The Lemon Festival was born in 1934. Two years later, the first exhibition of citrus fruit and flowers was launched in the Biovès gardens. François Ferrié was in charge of designing floats decorated with lemons and oranges and decorations in the gardens. It was proven to be an enormous success, confirmed year after year.

### **Bibliography :**

- *"M'en avisou... Menton à la Belle Époque"* by Charles Martini de Châteauneuf
- *"Menton et La Fête du Citron"* by Frank Ricordel. Éditions Serre/L'Ancre Solaire.
- *Le Citron de Menton de la SAHM et ville de Menton/ Edition ROM*

# The Lemon, a symbol of the identity of Menton

*“The lemon has become the city’s strongest and clearest symbol.” The Lemon Festival, rooted in local tradition, has changed with the times*

## **The lemon as an emblem** \_\_\_\_\_

The lemon has become the symbol of the City of Menton. We have chosen it as our emblem: it is now in the heart of the graphic design specifications for all our documents. It perfectly illustrates the motto in our logo, “Menton: my city is a garden”.

## **The Lemon Festival: a positive impact** \_\_\_\_\_

The impact of the Lemon Festival both on the city’s economy and image: “Thanks to this high-profile event, the name of Menton is known worldwide. It has a positive association with the idea of fun, as well as with a local product, the lemon, whose symbolism is also very much in stride with the times. The lemon suggests a colour, a taste, rural and ecological notions, the smell of Mediterranean gardens...”

## **A qualitative leap forward** \_\_\_\_\_

Working with professionals from the entertainment world, like Disneyland Paris, has enabled the Lemon Festival to make a qualitative leap forward. The municipal teams have surpassed themselves in creating more and more elegant and elaborate subjects. Some of our co-workers display true artistic talent. So much so, this know-how has attracted the interest of partners: projects are being studied with Disney World in Orlando, Florida, and with Tunisia... The Lemon Festival a source of expansion and technology transfer, now that’s being innovative!”

## **An argument for tourism** \_\_\_\_\_

In his eyes, the lemon is an excellent argument to promote tourism in Menton in the context of a policy of renewal of tourism, emphasising the concept of “nature and culture” through its many facets: agricultural, in relation to the landscape, with plantations of lemon trees; botanical, with the Palais Carnolès collection; gastronomic, by developing products made with lemon, recipes, drinks...”

# The Lemon of Menton

*The Lemon of Menton differs from its Italian, Spanish and Corsican relatives!*

## **A very bright yellow** \_\_\_\_\_

Several varieties of lemons are grown in the Menton region: Santa Theresa, Villafranca, Eureka... The shape is more elliptical than round with a bright yellow colour. It is also characterized by very fructiferous branches bearing up to fifteen fruits, while there are less than five to a branch on most lemon trees. The research together with the INRA\* reveals that the lemon grown in the Menton region is rich in acid and essence, with a high essential oil content in the peel.”

## **Boosting production** \_\_\_\_\_

After a period of decline, production in the Menton region is under revival. There are about fifteen professional citrus growers in the townships of Menton, Roquebrune, Sainte-Agnès and Castellar, producing more than 150 metric tons of lemons yearly. The municipality of Menton, the Chamber of Agriculture and the Crédit Agricole bank was promoting the development of production and over 5,000 trees were planted in the 90’.

Young citrus farmers are particularly welcome in the town's unconstructible areas. The Ville de Menton will provide citrus farmers council land that can be farmed and encourage private landowners to do the same. *“This well help us meet the demand from restaurateurs and gourmet markets.”*

## **A label of quality for the Lemon of Menton** \_\_\_\_\_

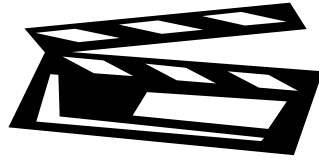
Business people and local elected officials are trying to get a quality-label for Menton lemons. An association of citrus fruit professionals and proprietors (APCM), which seeks to promote a higher profile for the Menton lemon, recently submitted a formal dossier to the French authority on place names and quality control (Institut National des Appellations d’Origines et de Qualité) with the aim of being awarded Protected Geographical Indication.

## **The Palais Carnolès citrus collection**

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The town's Gardens Department also wants to promote local botanical heritage, drawing special attention to the citrus collection at the Palais Carnolès: “It's very interesting from both a botanical and a protectionist point of view, consisting of over 100 different varieties of fruit (11 different kinds of lemon, 6 of citron, 20 of orange and 8 of lime, as well as manderines, clementines, kumquats, bergamots, Seville oranges, grapefruits, and pomelos) spread out over 340 trees. Such biodiversity has led the Palais Carnolès' citrus collection to be recognised by the CCVS (Conservatory of Specialized Vegetable Collections -- “collection agréée”) and the Ministry of Culture (“Jardin Remarquable”).”

From 2009, the garden maintenance team is experimenting with a method of associating mycorrhiza with citrus fruit trees, which have been weakened by several years of drought. This natural method, which uses mushrooms, promotes the development of the root system, enabling the tree to better absorb nutrients and water and to resist bacterial and cryptogamic attack.



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[www.tourisme-menton.fr](http://www.tourisme-menton.fr)

[www.feteducitron.com/pro-fete-du-citron.html](http://www.feteducitron.com/pro-fete-du-citron.html)