Find sweet and sour citrus fruits in season this winter. It may seem unlikely, but bright, fresh citrus fruits – including lemons, oranges and limes – reach their peak in the blustery winter months. Thanks to powerhouse producers such as Florida and California, who have year-round sunshine, these fruits are readily available in the cold season, though you can also find them throughout the year.

When choosing lemons and limes, look for smooth, bright skin. You should squeeze these fruits when you’re picking, as the juiciest ones will give a little. You can try this trick with larger citrus as well, such as oranges and grapefruits, though it may be harder to tell. Pick oranges that have smooth skin and are free of mold.

Citrus fruits are delicious as the star of any dish, but they can also amp up the flavor without being a main ingredient. Squeeze fresh lemon juice on fish or lime juice on chicken. When juicing a lemon or lime, roll it on the counter first. This helps burst open some of the individual segments inside so you can get to the juice easier.

You can also sprinkle freshly grated citrus zest to perk up your favorite dish, or add it to an orange and rosemary shortbread cookie batter recipe.

**Orange and Rosemary Shortbread Cookies**

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2½ cups self-rising flour
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup rosemary, finely chopped

**Directions:**
Preheat oven to 325°. Cream together sugar and butter until fluffy. Stir in flour, zest and rosemary. Mix well. Press into a cookie mold, or roll into a 12-inch log and slice into 16 cookies. If baking in a mold, follow particular baking instructions for the mold. Remember to grease and flour the mold very thoroughly. If baking individual cookies, place on cookie sheet and bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden. While still warm, decorate the cookies by pricking their tops with tines of a fork.
UT Extension provides a gateway to the University of Tennessee as the outreach unit of the Institute of Agriculture. With an office in every Tennessee county, UT Extension delivers educational programs and research-based information to citizens throughout the state. In cooperation with Tennessee State University, UT Extension works with farmers, families, youth and communities to improve lives by addressing problems and issues at the local, state and national levels.

For more information on this or other family and consumer sciences related topics, contact Shelly Barnes, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent for UT Extension in Wilson County. Barnes can be reached at sbarnes@utk.edu or 615-444-9584.