CITRUS MARMALADE

Some citrus fruits ( oranges, or mandarins, maybe grapefruit, lemon, lime, a mix if you like... whatever you have)  
1 lemon  
water  
sugar

This is a recipe based on the relationship between the fruit mass and the sugar, so you can make any quantity – you don't need to weigh the fruit first.

Equipment: 2 big pans or 1 pan and 1 pressure cooker. Plastic colander/ large holed sieve. Large measuring jug. Kitchen scales. Sharp knife. Chopping board. Metal ladle. Potato masher or big spoon. Jam funnel (optional, but saves a lot of mess). Glass jars with metal lids (1 kg of fruit mass makes approximately 3 x 350g jars) Tall pan with lid for sterilising jar lids and completed jars of marmalade.

Day 1  
Wash and slice the fruit into 2cm slices (approximately). Put in a big pan or pressure cooker. Add water so there is about 2cm of water in the pan after you have put in the fruit. Bring to boil. If you are using a pressure cooker, cook on high pressure for about 25 minutes. If you don't have a pressure cooker, put the lid on your pan and boil until the fruit is quite soft (about 1 to 2 hours), adding more water if necessary.

Leave overnight. If you can't make the marmalade next day, don't worry – the boiled fruit can last for up to 4 days in the refrigerator.

Day 2  
Wash your jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse thoroughly in clean hot water. When you are ready to begin making the marmalade, put the glass jars in a cold oven, light it and allow them to heat up while you make the marmalade. Put the lids in a lidded pan with about 4cm of water in, and bring to the boil. If you use a jam funnel, sterilise that, too.

Using a sharp knife, scrape the pith and pulp off each slice of fruit, put the rind to one side. Place the pith and pulp into a sieve over another large pan.

Push and stir the wet mass through the sieve using a metal spoon (I use a potato masher). You will be left with a quantity of pips and tough bits. Throw these away.

Take the sharp knife and cut the rind finely, into 2mmm strips.

Put the rinds and the remaining smooth mass into a big measuring jug. Press down, level off, then add enough water to make the liquid level with the top of the rind, to the nearest 100g on your measuring jug.  
Look how much mass you now have in the measuring jug. Using kitchen scales, weigh out enough sugar to be 75% of that mass. E.g. if it's 1 litre of mass, you need 750 g of sugar.

Put the mass back in the large pan, and begin to heat it. Add the sugar, stirring carefully. Allow to come to a rolling boil. Boil for about 20 minutes, checking for 'set' after about 10 minutes and regularly after that. You will know when it's almost ready because the mixture darkens slightly and takes on a smoother, more glossy look.

Check for set by dripping a little hot marmalade on a cold plate. Leave for a few second, then push it with your finger. If the mixture wrinkles, it's about ready. Turn off the heat and allow to stand for a minute or two.

Turn off the heat in the oven. Using kitchen tongs, remove the lids from the pan of hot water and place in the oven to dry off. Don't allow them to touch the glass jars, as the difference in temperature will crack the glass.

Using oven gloves, carefully move the glass jars onto a wire oven shelf on your worktop. This is important because the metal wire distributes the heat from the poured marmalade evenly, so your jars are less likely to crack. Put the jam funnel onto the first jar, and slowly, using a metal ladle, pour the marmalade into the jar. If it hisses a lot, your jar is too hot, so add small amounts at a time until it stops hissing. Fill the jars very close to the top. Close the jars with your dry lids.

Bring the water in the sterilising bath back to the boil and carefully lower the jars into the pan. Don't let them touch! Do this in more than one batch if you have lots of jars. Cover the pan and leave to boil for 9 minutes for each batch. Use a tea towel to lift the jars out of the pan and put them back on the wire oven rack to cool. Tighten any lids at this point.

As the jars cool, they should make a little popping noise which tells you the lids have sealed. Look at the jars carefully. Any which have not sealed, store in a refrigerator (they'll keep for up to 6 months) and use first. The sealed ones can be stored on a shelf and will last for a couple of years. Label the jars with the contents and the date you made it.

Festive variation: When you cook the fruit on day 1, replace the water with red wine and also add a knob of ginger and a half stick of cinnamon. Don't forget to remove and discard the ginger and cinnamon on day 2 when you're making the marmalade.