



PAPAYA TALKING POINTS

Safety

- Papayas contain substances called chitinases that are associated with the latex-fruit allergy syndrome. **People who have a latex allergy are very likely to be allergic to papaya as well.** Cooking the food may deactivate the enzymes.

2. & 4. A slice Papaya history & What season do we pick papaya?

- The exact origination of papaya is unknown but it is **believed to be native to southern Mexico and neighboring Central America.**
- It is recorded that seeds were taken to Panama and then the Dominican Republic before 1525 and cultivation spread to warm elevations throughout South and Central America, southern Mexico, the West Indies and Bahamas, and to Bermuda in 1616.
- Spaniards carried seeds to the Philippines about 1550 and the papaya traveled from there to Malacca and India. Seeds were sent from India to Naples in 1626. Now the papaya is familiar in nearly all tropical regions of the Old World and the Pacific Islands and has become naturalized in many areas. Seeds were probably brought to Florida from the Bahamas
- Today papaya can be found all year long with the peak season being early summer and fall.**
- Most of the papayas imported come from Hawaii, but smaller quantities from Florida, California, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Central and South American countries are becoming more available.

3. How do Papayas grow?

- Since the **papaya plant does NOT have bark, it is considered an herb (NOT a tree)**, that can grow 10 to 12 feet in height
- Papayas are usually grown from seed and the plant grows rapidly, with the first fruit being produced before the end of the first year. The plants live for about five years.
- The leaves of the plant are 1 to 3 ½ feet in length and up to two feet wide. These large leaves live for 4 to 6 months.
- The plant also has brightly colored flowers with five petals. Some plants have flowers that are both male and female while others produce flowers that are one or the other. **Wind is the largest factor in terms of pollination.** However, some insects and moths help to pollinate the plants, so that it can bear fruit.

5. Why should we eat Papayas?

- Papayas are good for you and can potentially lower the risk of many diseases, including heart disease and colon cancer. In addition, one papaya can exceed the daily recommended dose of **Vitamin C and is also rich in Vitamin A and Vitamin E**, all of which are beneficial antioxidants. One way to preserve fresh papayas is to dry them.
- Ripe papaya extract is one of the products developed from the potent fruit. Another extract is green, or unripe, papaya extract. Both contain the enzyme papain, which can benefit someone with stomach problems.



- The papaya is regarded as a fair source of iron and calcium; a good source of vitamins A, B and G and an excellent source of vitamin C (ascorbic acid).
- **Constipation Relief**
 - Ripe papaya extract contains papain, an enzyme that helps with the digestive system. While it contains less papain than extract taken from unripe fruit, the ripe papaya extract soothes mild tummy troubles. It prevents bloating, gas production and indigestion when taken before eating.
- **Dietary Supplement**
 - Ripe papaya extract also contains enough vitamins and antioxidants to make it worth taking as a dietary supplement. The extract can be taken on a daily basis to aid in digestion.
- **Cancer Reduction**
 - Papaya extract has been proven to slow the development of cancer cells in a laboratory setting via cell cultures, according to Healthfinder.gov. The extract has no long-term effect on the drinker and affects 10 different forms of cancers, including breast, cervix, lung and pancreas.
- **Beauty Products**
 - Papaya extract is frequently found in shampoos, skin moisturizers and soap because of its antioxidants and other nutrients. The extract is said to lighten skin and reduce blemishes, giving skin a more even skin tone.
- Here are some cosmetology purposes:
 - Papaya contains the papain, which has wonderful exfoliating properties - removing dead skin, and specifically damaged skin.
 - Papaya juice is said to reduce freckles or brown spots caused due to exposure to sunlight. It also has a positive effect on skin ulcers and on severe burn wounds.
 - *For glowing skin*: Rub the inner side of ripe papaya peel over face and neck. Wash off with water for a soft glowing skin.
 - *Acne*: Make a mask with the fleshy side of a green papaya skin and apply.
 - *Dandruff*: Shampoo hair with diluted papaya vinegar mixed with lemon juice and leave on for 20 minutes. Rinse the hair with diluted papaya vinegar. Papaya hair shampoos are also available in health food stores. \
 - *Sunspots*: Apply the fleshy side of the skin from a green fruit to the spots. Also apply papaya vinegar to the spots.
- Folk Uses
 - In tropical folk medicine, the fresh latex is smeared on boils, warts and freckles. A root decoction is claimed to expel roundworms. Roots are also used to make salt.
 - Crushed leaves wrapped around tough meat will tenderize it overnight. The leaf also functions as a primitive soap substitute in laundering.
 - Dried leaves have been smoked to relieve asthma or as a tobacco substitute. Packages of dried, pulverized leaves are sold by "health food" stores for making tea, despite the fact that the leaf decoction is administered as a purgative for horses in Ghana and in the Ivory Coast it is a treatment for genito-urinary ailments. The dried leaf infusion is taken for stomach troubles in Ghana.

6. How do you pick a good Papaya?

- Papayas that are totally green or are hard can only be used for cooking or in Asian salads.
- Check the outside. The outside of a papaya tells you a lot about what is on the inside. Green papayas are not ripe and must be stored properly to allow further ripening. Yellow papayas are ready for eating. Papayas that feature deep orange areas on the outside are over ripe and going bad.
- Good papayas are slightly firm to the touch. Bad papayas feel soft, look shriveled and do not have a healthy green or yellow color. Bruising on the outside of the papaya is a clear indicator that the meat of the fruit is not going to taste well. Softness at the stem of the fruit also indicates that the inside is bruised or rotten.
- Smell the fruit. Uncut papayas do not have a scent. Before eating a papaya, cut it open and inhale. The inside of a good papaya smells sweet and musky. A bad papaya smells rotted or fermented.

How to eat papaya...

- The simplest way to eat papaya is to cut the fruit in half, scoop out the seeds, and eat it with a spoon! Another quick way is to peel the outside with a vegetable peeler, cut into slices or wedges and remove the seeds. And here's a tasty tip: Sprinkle papaya with lemon or lime juice to BOOST its delicious flavors!
- The pulp of the papaya is also golden-yellow and is fleshy, juicy and smooth. It has a sweet-tart flavor. It has a large central cavity which is filled with shiny, gray seeds.
- The papaya is a popular breakfast fruit in many countries and is also used in many food preparations like salads, pies, juices, and confections.
- Raw papayas contain a milky juice which contains a protein-digesting enzyme known as papain. Papain is an excellent meat tenderizer.

Serving ideas

- One of the easiest ways to eat papaya is to eat it just like a melon. Cut it lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and then eat it with a spoon.
- You can even use a melon baller to scoop out the fruit of a halved papaya. When adding to a fruit salad, add the papaya just before serving as it causes the other fruits to become very soft.
- The big black seeds, they are actually edible and blended into a creamy salad dressing, giving it a peppery flavor.
- Mix diced papaya, cilantro, jalapeno peppers and ginger together to make a unique salsa that goes great with shrimp, scallops and halibut.

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