

Florida Food Fare

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Breadfruit

Description: Native to Malayan Archipelago, breadfruit has been a traditional carbohydrate source for many tropical cultures. It gained official recognition when mutiny resulted on Captain Bligh's famed *Bounty*, in 1788, because the crew had to care for thousands of hand-planted breadfruit trees bound for the West Indies Islands. Today the breadfruit is eaten worldwide.

Fruits are rounded or ovoid 15 - 20 cm (6" - 8") long and 20 cm (8") in diameter. Generally the skin is thin and green, becoming pale green with red brown areas on maturity. It is patterned with irregular polygon shaped "bumps" which flatten and enlarge on maturity of the fruit. When mature, the interior of the fruit is white or pale and starchy. When completely green, the raw breadfruit is hard and starchy, like a raw potato; when slightly ripe, the raw pulp resembles both eggplant and partly baked bread. Cooked at this later stage, breadfruit acquired a texture that might be likened to that of an extremely starchy potato mixed with a plantain, but is much stickier than either. It has a slightly musky, fruity flavor, but at the same time it is very bland. Fully ripened, the flesh becomes rather sweet and tacky; it may be as soft and creamy as an avocado, or runny as ripe Camembert, or tender as rising yeast batter, with an aroma that matches.

Availability: Grown in south Florida, breadfruit is available January through March, in limited quantities. It is also imported from the West Indies islands, particularly Jamaica, and is available June through October, and sometimes year-round. It is most apt to found locally in specialty markets.

Selection and Care: For potato-type recipes select breadfruit that is firm with a bright green peel. Sometimes green breadfruit will have a white milky sap, which is natural. For recipes calling for ripe breadfruit, select fruit that may be soft to the touch with brown speckled peel. The interior texture will be similar to a ripe avocado.

Nutritional Value: Raw green breadfruit provides 113 calories per 100 grams or 1/2 -cup portion and is rich in potassium. A 1/2 cup portion also contains: 1.5g protein, 25.4g carbohydrates, 3g fat, 490mg potassium, 2mg sodium, and 30mg vitamin C.

Use & Preparation: Breadfruit is used almost exclusively as a vegetable, generally when wholly or partly green. The green, hard fruit can be boiled and used much like white potatoes. Steam peeled chunks for 45-60 minutes or parboil in salted water until tender, approximately 30 minutes, then proceed with your favorite recipe.

The peel on a ripe, soft breadfruit ranges from a yellow green to brown appearance and has a slightly sweet and aromatic flavored flesh that adapts well to curry sauce or desserts such as coconut custard. Soak the raw cut flesh in cold water for 30 minutes before using to "refresh" the tissues and to remove the white, starchy sap. Drain well before continuing with your favorite recipe.

Recipes:

Dilled Breadfruit & Yogurt Soup

1 lb. breadfruit, (approx. 3 cups)	1 cup evaporated skim milk or fat free half & half
1 cup chopped onion	1 cup plain low fat yogurt
1 cup diced celery	Salt and pepper to taste
2-3 cloves minced garlic	2 tablespoons dried dill
4 cups chicken stock	1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Peel and chop breadfruit into 1" pieces, in covered saucepan. Simmer breadfruit, onion, celery and garlic in chicken stock until breadfruit is tender, approximately 45 minutes. Chill. Stir in milk or half & half. Process in blender until breadfruit pieces are the size of small peas. Add yogurt, salt and pepper to taste, dried dill. Garnish with fresh parsley. Yield: 2 quarts.

Breadfruit Bread

1 cup very ripe breadfruit	2 teaspoons baking powder
1 egg	1/4 teaspoon soda
1/3 cup canola oil	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup low fat milk	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup whole wheat or oat flour	

Put egg, oil and milk in mixing bowl and mix well. Add breadfruit and mix thoroughly. Measure and sift all dry ingredients. Sift dry ingredients into the liquid ingredients. Mix until smooth. Spray loaf pan with butter-flavored cooking spray. Pour batter into loaf pan. Bake at 325 degrees F. for one hour.

Baked Breadfruit Omelet

1 pound breadfruit (3 cups peeled, cubed)	1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1 cup chopped onion	2 beaten eggs plus 3/4 cup egg substitute
1 tablespoon butter	1 cup low fat sour cream
1 tablespoon olive oil	2 cups grated low fat Swiss cheese
1 pound fresh or 10 ounces frozen spinach	

Sauté breadfruit and onion in butter and olive oil until onion is brown on edges. Reduce heat, add fresh spinach and cover saucepan to wilt spinach. Combine lime juice, eggs and sour cream. Pour over spinach-breadfruit mixture. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 cup Swiss cheese. Top with remainder of Swiss cheese. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 45-50 minutes. Serves 6-8.

Caribbean Roasted Breadfruit

1 breadfruit

Roast the breadfruit whole over charcoal (the best method), or directly over a gas burner. Turn the fruit as it begins to char. The roasting takes about an hour. When steam starts to escape from the stem end, the breadfruit is done.

Remove the breadfruit from the fire, and cut a circle at the stem end. Scoop out the heart and discard it. Scoop out the meat, or cut off the charred outer skins, and cut the meat into slices and serve it hot.

Breadfruit may also be roasted in the peel for one hour in a 375 degree F oven. This will yield a nutty-flavored side dish with a dry firm texture. Serve with spicy coconut sauce.