

Florida Food Fare

by Jean Meadows and Mary Jo Oswald
Family & Consumer Sciences
University of Florida / IFAS
Sarasota County Extension



Guava

Description: Guava ---- goo-wa-va ---- is a sweet or low-acid fruit suited to eating out of hand. Guavas may have thick or thin skins, depending upon the variety. Skin color is light green to yellow and the flesh may be white, yellow, pink or red. The fruit is usually oval in shape, about 2 inches in diameter and 3 inches long, with small edible seeds inside. There is also a small red guava, known as the Cattley or strawberry guava, about 3/4 inch in diameter.

History: Native to the American tropics, believed to have originated from the region between Peru and Mexico, the guava (*Psidium guajava*) is one of the more widely utilized tropical fruits throughout the tropical and sub-tropical world. In Florida, guavas grow as a semi-wild and cultivated tree.

Availability: Fruit matures practically year round, with the peak season during the summer months. Fresh fruit may be found locally in some of the produce markets. It is available year round in various processed forms - canned guava shells, guava paste and guava jelly. Guava juice is one of the major ingredients used in some of the processed juice blends.

Selection: Ripe guavas have a fragrant aroma that ranges from strong and penetrating to mild and pleasant; shells give to gentle pressure. Guavas sold in markets are usually quite firm and should be ripened further at home before using. Fruit ranges from thin-shelled with many seeds embedded in a firm pulp to thick-shelled with few seeds. Flavor ranges from sweet to slightly acid.

Nutritional Value: 1 medium guava, 2 1/2 inches diameter with seeds discarded, is about 1/2 cup or 100gm. It contains: 86% water, 51 calories, .8 gm protein, .6 gm fat, 11.9 gm carbohydrate, 792 IU vitamin A, 183.5 mg vitamin C (about 5 times that of an orange), 284 mg potassium, 5 mg sodium.

Storing: Ripen guavas at room temperature until they give to gentle pressure. Refrigerate ripe guavas immediately and use within 2 days. Freezing: Wash firm, ripe guavas. Peel thinly. Cut in halves and with a teaspoon, scoop out seeds and soft pulp. Pack into moisture-vapor proof containers and cover with a medium syrup, using 2 parts sugar to 1 part water. (Do not heat; the sugar will dissolved without heat, if stirred.) Allow 2 cups syrup for each quart of shells. Seal and freeze. Lime juice may be added if guavas are sweet. Guavas will keep at 0 degrees F. for up to 1 year.

Basic Uses & Preparation: Popular as a fresh table fruit, guava is often consumed as fresh juice. It is processed into juice, nectar, puree, jam and as preserves. Guavas may be frozen, canned, preserved, spiced or made into jam, butter, marmalade, relish, catsup and chutney. Served fresh, it makes a great breakfast fruit sliced with a little sugar and cream. It also mixes well with other tropical fruits for a salad. Guava desserts include turnovers, cobblers, cakes, pies and mousses.

Recipes:

Grandma's Deep-Dish Guava Pie *My grandmother had guava trees of many different varieties. When guavas ripen they can become quite smelly if allowed to rot on the ground. The grandchildren's job was to keep all the guavas picked up and separate the good ones to use. This recipe was often our reward.*

4 cups peeled, seeded, sliced guavas	1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar	1 teaspoon lime juice
2 tablespoons flour	2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	Pastry for 2-crust pie
	Cream or ice cream

Place guavas in large crust-lined pie pan. Combine flour, sugar, cinnamon and salt. Sprinkle over guavas. Add lime juice and dot with butter. Cover with pastry top and pinch crust edges together. Cut gashes in pastry top for steam vents. Brush with milk. Bake in a 375 degrees F. oven for 35-40 minutes or until guavas are tender. Serve warm with cream or ice cream.

Stuffed Guava Shells

A favorite dessert in many Spanish restaurants.

8 ounces reduced fat cream cheese,
softened or low fat cottage cheese
2 tablespoons skim milk
1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon orange juice
1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice
3 cups guava shells

Place softened cream cheese in bowl, beat. Add remaining ingredients, except guavas. Beat well. Place cream cheese mixture in guava shells, serve chilled.

Guava Delight

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
3 cups guava juice
1/2 cup orange juice

3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup pineapple juice
2 teaspoons grated orange rind
2 bottles (28 oz.) ginger ale, chilled

Combine sugar and water in a saucepan and simmer 10 minutes; cool. Stir in juices and rind; chill. Add ice and ginger ale just before serving. Makes 12 (8 oz.) servings.