

Florida Food Fare

by Mary King
Family & Consumer Sciences
University of Florida / IFAS
Sarasota County Extension



Jakfruit

Description: The jakfruit originated in India and is now popular throughout South East Asia. Elsewhere in humid tropical areas it is a common garden tree. It is the largest tree-borne fruit in the world, reaching 40 pounds or more in weight and up to 36 inches long and 20 inches in diameter. The exterior of the fruit is green or yellow and covered with spikes. The interior consists of large edible bulbs of yellow banana-flavored flesh, called arils, that enclose a smooth, oval, light brown seed. The seed is 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches long and 1/2 to 3/4 inches thick and is white and crisp within. There may be 100 or up to 500 seeds in a single fruit. When fully ripe, the unopened jakfruit emits a strong disagreeable odor resembling that of decayed onions, while the pulp of the opened fruit smells of pineapple and banana.

Availability: Though it was introduced to Florida many years ago, it has never attained widespread acceptance. This was probably due to its unusual appearance, unique aroma and lack of local familiarity with its uses. Jakfruit is currently grown for commercial use in South Florida on a limited basis. It is becoming more popular as a dooryard fruit as more research is being done to improve the quality of the fruit. Jakfruit is available from June through October.

Nutritional Value: 1 cup of sliced Jakfruit contains about 155 calories, 39g carbohydrate, 2.6g dietary fiber, a trace of fat and no cholesterol. It also yields 56mg calcium, 61mg magnesium, 499mg potassium, 11mg vitamin C, 23mcg folate and 490 IU vitamin A.

Selection and Care: When mature, there is usually a change of fruit color from light green to yellow brown. Spines closely spaced, yield to moderate pressure and there is a dull hollow sound when the fruit is tapped. After ripening, they turn brown and deteriorate rather quickly if not kept cool. The ripened fruit can be kept for 3 to 6 weeks at 52 degrees to 55 degrees F.

Preparation and Use: Immature fruit is boiled, fried or roasted. Chunks are cooked in lightly salted water until tender and then served. The seeds can also be boiled or roasted and eaten similar to chestnuts. In Southeast Asia, dried slices of unripe fruit are sold in the market. The fully ripe fruit aril, (flesh that surrounds the seeds), is used in soups, main dishes, desserts, milk drinks, ice cream and fruit salads. The jakfruit arils freeze well and they may be used at a later time like fresh fruit. Arils are excellent dried or preserved in syrup.

Recipes:

Stuffed Jakfruit

Oil hands with vegetable oil and cut the fruit in half. Remove each individual aril imbedded in the pulp. Slit open and remove seeds. Using broken pieces of each aril, add white raisins, coconut and nuts, pecans or almonds. Put all together in food chopper. Grind together and stuff the individual arils where they were removed. Serve chilled, 2 or 3 per person.

Tender Jakfruit Curry

3 cups chopped jakfruit	1 1/2 teaspoons brown sugar
1 small red whole pepper cut into 2 or 3 pieces	1 tablespoon fresh coconut gratings
1 teaspoon salt	1/2 teaspoon hot pepper powder
1 teaspoon white or yellow lentils	2 tablespoons canola oil
	1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds

To prepare the fruit: jakfruit should not be mature. The seeds inside should be soft. Cut the fruit into 4 pieces lengthwise. Peel the thick skin off and remove the middle portion. Then cut it into small pieces, about 1/4 to 1/2 inch cubes. Soak in cold water for 15 minutes and drain. On medium heat cook the fruit with a little water, salt, brown sugar, and pepper powder until tender, about 1/2 hour and stir occasionally. Add coconut gratings. Saute oil, pepper, mustard seeds and lentils in a pan on moderate heat. When the mustard seeds start cracking, add the cooked fruit. Mix well and remove from heat.

Jakfruit Candy

1 ripe firm jakfruit	1 tablespoon lime juice
Water	Sugar

Cut jakfruit and remove skin. Choose arils about the same size, cut ends and remove seeds. Slice large arils but leave small ones whole. Dilute lime juice in 1 gallon of water and soak jakfruit in limewater for 2 hours. Remove, wash, and blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Dip them immediately in cold water and drain. Make a syrup of 2 parts sugar with 1 part water. Boil arils in this syrup for 5 minutes. Leave them in syrup for 1 week. Each day, remove the arils and boil syrup for 5 minutes. After the week, remove them and boil the syrup as usual. Then add them to boiling syrup and stir gently until all water has evaporated. Remove any excess sugar from arils and when dry, wrap each one in waxed paper. Store in sealed jars.

Jakfruit Apple Marmalade

Ripe but firm jakfruit

Sugar

Apple pulp

Cut and skin the jakfruit. Choose arils of about the same size, cut the ends from each and remove the seed. Finely slice the arils. For each 2 cups of sliced arils, use 1 cup of apple pulp and 3 cups sugar. Mix all ingredients and cook until mixture thickens and marmalade sets. Pour into sterilized jars and seal. Process 5 minutes in boiling water bath.