

# Florida Food Fare

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## Atemoya

**Description:** A tropical exotic often called the Florida cherimoya, the atemoya is a member of the *Annonaceae* family. It is a cross between a cherimoya and the Sugar Apple (sweetsop) and is prized through out the world for its exotic flavor. The fruit has a conical to ovate shape with a rough petal configuration (areoles) on its light green outer surface. In the center of the fruit is a sweet, creamy, rich, vanilla custard-like flavored pulp, with seeds. It is very dense with a real milk flavor. There are 10-40 dark brown or black seeds per fruit.

**Availability:** Produced mostly in south Florida, atemoya has a short harvest season. The fruit matures in late August through October, with smaller quantities sometimes available through January. The fruit is hand harvested and packed to prevent bruising. It is most apt to be found in small produce markets.

**Selection and Care:** Fruits often split at the stem end as they ripen so they are harvested when slightly green and allowed to ripen off the tree. They have a limited storage life (5-10 days) but can be held for several days at 55-60 degrees F. to slow ripening. Ripe atemoyas can be kept refrigerated for 3-5 days. Cut fruit stays fresh refrigerated for 1-2 days.

**Nutritional Value:** Relatively high in calories, it is an excellent source of vitamin C, is high in fiber and low in sodium. One fruit contains: 94 calories, 1.5 gm protein, 24 gm carbohydrates.

**Use & Preparation:** Primarily consumed as a fresh fruit but the pulp is used in desserts, salads, ice cream and milk shakes. The best way to use an atemoya is to chill it, halve and serve it straight. Spoon out the creamy pulp, discarding the seeds. It can also be cut into tiny pieces and made a part of an exotic fruit cup along with papaya, mango and soft melon. Because of its “nubby” outer surface, atemoyas need to be washed thoroughly using a scrub brush and warm water. Do not use soap; it will leave a residue.

### Tropical Trifle

1 package lady finger dessert cakes	1/4 cup sparkling grape juice
1 cup fresh orange sections	1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup atemoya chunks, seeded	1 cup lime marmalade*
2 cups lite whipped topping	1 cup fresh raspberries or strawberries
1/4 cup confectioners sugar	

In a large brandy snifter or bowl, line half of the lady fingers along sides. Layer orange sections and atemoya chunks. Stir in sugar, grape juice and nutmeg into whipped topping.. Spread half of this whipped topping mixture over fruit. Layer remaining lady fingers over whipped topping. Spread with marmalade. Sprinkle with fresh berries. Cover with remaining whipped topping. Chill several hours before serving for the maximum flavor. Serves 6-8.

\*If lime marmalade is not available, use orange marmalade and add 2 tablespoons lime or lemon zest.

### Tropical Atemoya and Papaya Smoothie

1 cup rice or soy milk	1 medium papaya, peeled and seeded
1/2 banana, peeled	1/4 cup orange juice
1 medium atemoya, peeled and seeded	2 strawberries

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Add additional liquid to reach desired consistency. Makes 2 servings.

### Atemoya with Sour Cream and Brown Sugar

One of those easy treats that just plain works. Halve the atemoya lengthwise; with a knife tip, pick out the seeds. With a blunt knife, spread the soft pulp evenly to fill the gaps left by the seeds (as you would spread peanut butter). Spoon a thick, even layer of lite sour cream onto this; top with a layer of brown sugar. Refrigerate for 1/2 hour (but no longer or the atemoya skin darkens and the sugar turns syrupy).

## **Atemoya Cream Dessert**

Fully ripe atemoya, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound

2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

2 cup lite whipped topping

Halve the atemoya and pick out all the seeds (they are fairly central) with a small fork. Scoop out every bit of the pulp and combine with the juice in a processor or blender. Work to a fine puree. Fold the puree into the whipped topping with a rubber spatula. Cover and chill for a few hours.