

Title:

Fruits You Don't See Everyday (In America)

Word Count:

917

Summary:

The list of exotic and tropical fruits is ever-growing and lengthy, here are some key facts about just a few!

Durian

Labelled the "king of fruit," this spiky melon originally hails from the forests of Southeast Asia. Since Durian literally means "thorny fruit" in Malay, its spiky exterior makes it hard to attempt opening the fruit, as some consider it more dangerous to touch than most cacti. The inside of a Durian consists of pods that are filled with a custard-like sub...

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Durian

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According to Proscitech.com, "To choose a Durian, pick a fruit which is comparatively light and whose stem appears big and solid. When shaking a good Durian, the seed should move." Durian lends itself well to milk-based foods like milkshakes, ice cream, and even cakes. The custard-like consistency can be used on its own for a rich dessert.

Durian season is typically summertime (from June to August). They can be found

in many mainstream supermarkets in the East, particularly in Japan. But in the West, they're often only found in Asian groceries and markets. Aside from its countries of origin, (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei), the largest exporter of the Durian fruit is Thailand.

#### Kiwano (Horned Melon)

The kiwano has taken on so many different descriptions in its day ranging from having the seeds of a cucumber, the look of a pomegranate, and the smell of a banana. The only sure facts about the kiwano are that they have yellow skin with spikes throughout, and bright green gelatinous insides with seeds throughout.

The fruit that bears such an aptitude of names like melano, jelly melon, and others in addition to kiwano and horned melon, was born in the Kalahari desert of Africa. Also called the African horned melon, is now also regularly grown in California and New Zealand.

#### Lychee

Another Southeast Asian native, the lychee is part of a whole family of small rough nut-shaped fruits. Along with its cousin, the rambutan, the lychee is often red in color with white gelatinous insides. Used in some desserts, the flavor is sweet and citrusy.

The fruits are harvested during early summer, and are supposed to be eaten fresh. But, there are also such fruits as sun-dried lychees that take the name of lychee nuts. This preservation method was the only way lychees were consumed prior to 1950, according to Proscitech.com

#### Pitaya (Dragonfruit)

A fruit of cactus plants, the pitaya has a bright reddish pink leathery skin with green long and curly spikes protruding from it. The insides are white with black specks throughout, making this fruit one of the most variable in color. Some variations of the fruit have red flesh, or yellow skin.

The dragonfruit was originally found in Mexico, Central and South America, and is now cultivated in China, the Phillippines, Israel, Taiwan, and many Southeast Asian countries. Only growing at night, the pitaya is also labelled "Queen of the night."

#### Guava

Guavas are native to the Caribbean, Central and South Americas, and Mexico. They

grow on trees with tropical shrubs and white flowers, and can be yellowish-green or red in color. Both have a red juicy flesh on the inside that tastes sweet and flavorful, hence why guavas are often particularly used in desserts. With a long list of cultivars, the guava fruit thrives in humid weather, according to the Purdue University Horticulture Department.

Noted for its strong odor, the guava has also been cooked and prepared in salads and main courses, in addition to desserts. Some eat the guava raw by itself, or with cream cheese. The fruit can be round or pear-shaped and its seeds can be chewable.

#### Carambola (Starfruit)

The carambola fruit comes from the Carambola trees of Sri Lanka, Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. The yellow plasticky skin with distinct green edges gets its "starfruit" nickname from the shape it creates when cut latitudinally (please tell me it goes without saying that that would be a star). Carambola is now readily available in the United States as it is commercially grown in both Florida and Hawaii.

Carambolas are crunchy and juicy in texture, with a citrusy taste. Some believe that carambolas taste similar to apples or grapes. A significant amount of oxalic acid is present in the fruit, which can be dangerous for those with kidney trouble. It's also said that the consumption of starfruit with certain drugs can increase their effectiveness, so consumers should be careful.

Starfruit can be used to make wine in some countries, and in Myanmar is known for being a main ingredient in tea pickles.

#### Mangosteen

The mangosteen is seen as a precious commodity in the States these days because it wasn't until recently that it became available. Still very expensive in the West, mangosteens are grown in Southeast Asia, along with Durian and many of the other exotic fruits. One of the interesting facts about mangosteens is that it naturally possesses an acid that deters insects.

The sweet flesh is the only edible part of the mangosteen and is said to be creamy, citrusy, and reminiscent of a peach's flavor. "The ripe mangosteen is dark red and tastes best if harvested before turning purple or blue-black," according to [www.Proscitech.com](http://www.Proscitech.com).

And unlike what you might think, the mangosteen has no relation to the mango.

Sources:

[Proscitech.com](http://Proscitech.com) - Tropical Fruits

Wikipedia entries

Purdue University - Horticulture Department