



FRUITS COMMONLY USED AS VEGETABLES

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"Fruits used as vegetables" blur the lines between botanical and culinary categories and have become essential in cuisines around the world. Botanically, fruits are matured or ripened ovary of the flowering plants which contains seed. It is not, necessary that each fruit should contain seed as fruit like banana is parthenocarpic in nature which does not contains any seed. But it should be developed from ovary. Sometimes fruits develop from part of flower other than ovary, such fruits are called as false fruit or pseudo fruit. Fruits like apple, pear, strawberry and pineapple are examples of false fruit. In apple the fleshy portion which we eat is thalamus while in strawberry it is flower's receptacle. Vegetables are the any plant part (root, shoot, flower, fruit) that can be consumed either raw or after cooking and does not necessarily have a role in the plant's reproductive cycle.

Sometimes fruits and vegetables are also classified in culinary terms on the basis on their taste. Fruits have a sweet or tart flavor and can be used in desserts, snacks, or juices, whereas vegetables have a more mild or savory flavor and are typically served as a side dish or main entrée. There are some fruits also which can be cooked and used as a vegetable. Papaya, banana and jackfruit are used as vegetable in different parts of our country. When cooked, these fruits add a savory and adaptable element to various dishes and often considered as vegetables due to their flavor and culinary applications.

Papaya

Papaya, primarily recognized as a tropical fruit, is gaining attention for its adaptability in the kitchen, especially when used in its unripe form. Although it is botanically a fruit, unripe papaya is often treated as a vegetable in many international cuisines because of its firm texture, mild flavor, and ability to work well in savory dishes. This dual classification of papaya as both a fruit and a vegetable enhances its culinary flexibility. Unripe papaya is frequently featured in a wide range of dishes, including salads, stir-fries, soups, and curries, particularly in Southeast Asian and Latin American culinary traditions. A notable example is *Som Tum*, the Thai green papaya salad, which highlights the vegetable-like characteristics of the fruit in a flavorful and spicy dish.

In addition to its culinary uses, unripe papaya is rich in nutrients, offering a substantial amount of vitamin C, fiber, and enzymes such as papain, which supports digestion. These nutrients make the papaya not only a nutritious option but also a versatile ingredient in both raw and cooked forms. Its subtle flavor allows it to absorb a variety of spices and seasonings, making it ideal for savory recipes. The fruit's firm texture also ensures it retains its integrity during cooking, adding a pleasing crunch to meals. This shift from a sweet fruit to a savory vegetable challenges conventional food classifications and demonstrates the papaya's adaptability and significance in diverse culinary traditions. In its unripe state, papaya contributes to the depth and

variety of global cuisines while providing a wealth of health benefits.

Unripe papaya contains papain enzyme which do not only decompose only protein and sugar but fat also, it is one of the best health benefits for the human body. Digestive enzyme present in papaya may be a great help in the



digestive process. It might facilitate the easy digestion of the protein in the diet. Papaya as vegetable

provides us appreciable amount of Vitamin A and Vitamin C, both the nutrient act as antioxidants. Together they can promote healthy vision, skin and hair. In a study it was found that most of the minerals (Ca, P, Fe, K), protein and fat was recorded maximum in full mature green papaya when compared to the ripe papaya.

Jackfruit

Jackfruit is highly nutritious fruit which is native to India. It is an evergreen tree which bears [multiple fruit](#) formed from the fusion of the ovaries of multiple flowers. Jackfruit can be consumed in ripe as well as in unripe stage. After ripening it is used as table purpose while in unripe it can be cooked as a vegetable. In jackfruit, fruit growth and maturation usually takes about five months after the fruit sets, although harvesting can begin as early as four months. The maturation process consists of three stages: immature, mature for cooking, and ripe for eating. The immature stage is marked by a dark green color and tightly packed spines, and these fruits are commonly prepared as vegetables. In North India and Nepal, more than 80% of jackfruits are

harvested while still immature and cooked as a green vegetable.

Tender fruits can be stored by canning them in brine or by preparing them in a curried form with other vegetables. The mild flavor and texture of the jackfruit resembles meat, so canned green jackfruit is often referred to as "vegetable meat." People are using jackfruit as a meat substitute in vegan dishes.. Baramasi and Dofala are varieties which are grown for vegetable purpose. Seed of the jackfruit is often dried and preserved to be later used in curry. Nutritional value of uncooked jackfruit per 100 g is presented in Table 2.

Green jackfruit is a rich source of vitamin C, potassium and phosphorus. Being a good source of vitamin C, it improves the healing capacity by boosting the immune system and its richness in potassium it helps in controlling blood pressure.

Consuming it as a vegetable can help in preventing high cholesterol, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Jackfruit seed helps



to reduce LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol i.e poor cholesterol and increase HDL (high density lipoprotein) cholesterol i.e good cholesterol. Phytochemicals present in it have antioxidant properties (antioxidants control the oxidation of cells) which may help in controlling the development of degenerative diseases like cancer.

Banana

Green bananas are harvested before they ripen, have a more starchy texture and are often used in savory dishes, making them more akin to vegetables in their culinary application. Green

bananas are highly nutritious. They are packed with resistant starch, a type of carbohydrate that resists digestion in the small intestine, similar to fiber. This resistant starch supports gut health by serving as food for beneficial bacteria, aiding digestion, and improving overall intestinal function. Additionally, green bananas provide a good amount of potassium, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and other vital nutrients.



One of the main health advantages of green bananas is their ability to help regulate blood sugar. Since the starches in green bananas are not fully broken down, they have a lower glycemic index compared to ripe bananas, leading to

a slower and more steady impact on blood sugar levels. This makes them an excellent option for people with diabetes or anyone seeking a more gradual, sustained release of energy.

Around the world, green bananas are an important part of many cultural diets. In Southeast Asia, they are frequently included in savory curries or stir-fries. In India, the unripe bananas are commonly used in dishes like "kacha kela" (green banana curry), a spicy vegetarian specialty. In Africa, especially in countries like Uganda and Kenya, green bananas are often boiled or mashed and served alongside meats and vegetables, offering a nutritious and hearty base for the meal. In South America, green bananas are used much like plantains, playing a key role in stews, soups, and side dishes. In Brazil, for instance, a popular dish called "banana verde frita" involves frying green banana slices to create a crispy, savory treat.

Along with the fruits, banana flowers are also consumed in some parts of the world. The flowers of bananas are huge, red, pointed flowers, some of the flowers are yellow or pink in colour. Precisely, the colour of the flower can range from orange to purple and it contains pale yellow or white florets inside it. Banana flowers have many bioactive compounds and are nutty, crunchy and starchy to taste. It might also have the potential to help with certain health conditions like diabetes, diarrhoea, and cancer.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of fruits like papaya, jackfruit, and banana as vegetables in cooking illustrates the often ambiguous and overlapping distinction between botanical and culinary categories. Although these fruits are botanically defined as fruits because they develop from the ovary of a flower, their incorporation into savory dishes and the distinct ways they are prepared and cooked lead them to be categorized as vegetables in various culinary traditions. These adaptable ingredients not only elevate the taste of numerous dishes but also provide important nutritional benefits, supporting digestion, boosting the immune system, and helping to prevent chronic diseases. The versatility of these fruits highlights the fluidity of food classifications and underscores the need to consider both botanical and culinary perspectives when exploring the vast array of global cuisines. As the fusion of botanical and culinary definitions continues to evolve, the role of fruits as vegetables will remain a significant part of the development of worldwide culinary practices.