

JULY: TROPICAL FRUITS

Tropical fruits come in many colors, sizes, and varieties including **papaya, pineapple, mango, guava, bananas, and kiwi**. Most **tropical fruits** are eaten raw and contain lots of fiber, as well as vitamins A and C, and water. More fresh mangoes are eaten every day than any other fruit in the world!

CHECK OUT THE VARIETIES OF HEALTHY TROPICAL FRUITS DESCRIBED BELOW!

	<p>The papaya is a melon like fruit with yellow-orange flesh enclosed in a thin skin that varies in color from green to orange to rose. Papayas are a good source of vitamin A and C. Look for papayas that are partly or completely yellow in color, depending on variety, that give slightly to pressure, but are not soft at the stem-end. Avoid papayas that are bruised, shriveled, or have soft areas. Papayas that are hard and green are immature and will not ripen properly. Uncut papayas have no smell. Papayas that are cut should smell sweet, not bad or fermented.</p>
	<p>The word "Pineapple," is derived from the word pina, which was used to describe a pine cone by the Spanish. Today, in the US the pineapple is sold fresh or canned. It is most widely used tropical canned fruit. Select pineapples with a nice fragrant smell. It is really ripe if you can easily pull one of the leaves out of the top. Store at room temperature for 1-2 days before serving to allow the pineapple to become softer and sweeter.</p>
	<p>Most of the mangos sold in the US are imported from Mexico, Haiti, the Caribbean and South America. There more than 1,000 different varieties of mangos throughout the world. All varieties of mangos have a rich tropical flavor when ripe. Choose firm plump mangos that give slightly when pressure is applied. Avoid those with bruised or dry and shriveled skin. A ripe mango will have a full, fruity aroma emitting from the stem end. Mangos can be considered ready to eat when slightly soft to the touch and yield to gentle pressure. The best-flavored fruit have a yellow tinge when ripe; however, color may be red, yellow, orange, green, or any combination.</p>
	<p>Kiwifruit history began in the Yang-tse river valley in China, where it was called "Yangtao." The Yangtao was considered a delicacy by the court of the great Khans who cherished its delicious flavor and emerald-green color. The first kiwi was shipped to the United States in 1962, from New Zealand. It was renamed <i>Kiwifruit</i> after New Zealand's national bird the "kiwi." Most kiwifruit imported to the US comes from Chile and New Zealand. Kiwifruit is available year-round. Select kiwifruit with no bruises or soft spots. Avoid fruits with wrinkles or signs of exterior damage. Buy firm kiwifruit and let them ripen at home for a juicier flavor. A kiwifruit is ripe when plump and slightly soft to the touch with a fragrant smell. The seeds of the kiwifruit are a great source of fiber!</p>

	<p>The place of origin of the guava is uncertain, but it is believed to be an area extending from southern Mexico into or through Central America. It has been spread by man, birds and other animals to all warm areas of tropical America and in the West Indies. Varieties differ widely in flavor and seediness. The better varieties are soft when ripe, creamy in texture with a rind that softens to be fully edible. The flesh may be white, pink, yellow, or red.</p>
	<p>Bananas are the most popular fresh fruit in the US. They have a peel that comes off easily, bananas ripen after they have been picked, there is a generous supply all year, and they are inexpensive. Avoid bananas with brown spots that seem very soft. Select medium sized bananas with a nice color, specific for the variety. Choose fruit that is firm and free of bruises.</p>

Tropical Fruits Tips

- Combine **kiwi** slices, **pineapple** chunks, strawberry halves, and **banana** slices for an easy fruit dessert. Put all in a bowl, add a drizzle of orange juice concentrate, mix gently, and top with some vanilla Greek yogurt.
- When baking pork chops, consider laying a yummy piece of **pineapple** on top to add some natural sweetness.
- Make a healthy banana smoothie by blending one cup of **banana** slices, one cup of Greek yogurt, and a few cups of crushed ice. Blend all ingredients until smooth, about two to three minutes, pour into glasses.
- Throw a **banana** in your lunchbox or backpack for a quick snack with lots of fiber and potassium.

Tropical Fruits Recipes!

Papaya Boats – A Festive, Healthy Salad!

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 **papayas**, ripe 1
- 1 small can (11 oz.) mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 small **banana**, sliced
- 1 **kiwi**, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup mixed blueberries and strawberries
- 1 cup nonfat Greek vanilla yogurt
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh mint

Directions

Cut papayas in half lengthwise; scoop out seeds. Place oranges, banana, kiwi and berries in each papaya half. Combine yogurt, honey and mint; mix well and spoon over fruit before serving. Garnish with mint sprigs, if desired.

Kiwi Mango Salsa

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients

- 2 **kiwis**, diced
- ½ cup **mango**, chopped
- 2 tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. minced **chilies**
- Pinch of salt

Place diced kiwi in bowl and mix gently with other ingredients. Top cooked chicken or fish with the kiwi mango salsa.