

# Papaya - The Healthy Food

## Papaya – For Health

The papaya or paw paw is native to tropical America, but it is now grown in most tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. The large pear shaped fruits grow up to 8 inches in length approximately. Some varieties remain green when ripe, but most turn deep yellow and orange. Papayas have deep salmon pink flesh, with an abundance of grey-black seeds in the central cavity, which are edible. The soft, juicy sweet flesh tastes like a cross between melons and peaches.

## The Goodness of Papaya

Papayas are rich in Vitamin A and Calcium and contain large quantities of the enzyme papain, which breaks down protein and can be used to tenderize meat. Papain also makes this fruit very easy to digest.

## How to Buy

Choose uniformly yellow fruit. Sniff them, the scent should be delicate. Do not buy papayas with damaged or shriveled skins since they bruise easily. If the fruit is not ripe, check the skin around the stem end, it should be yellow, otherwise the papaya will never ripen. Ripe papayas should be eaten immediately. Fruit that is not quite ripe should be left at room temperature until soft and yellow.

## How to Cook

Simply cut the papayas in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds from the cavity. You can eat the seeds (they have a peppery flavor), but they are not particularly pleasant. Squeeze a little lime or lemon juice on the flesh before serving. Papayas can be used in the same way as melons, served solo with a squeeze of lime or sprinkled with ground ginger and served with meat. The cubed flesh can be added to fruit salads, made into ice-creams and fruit drinks or served with yogurt. Finely chopped papaya is perfect with chilies in fresh salsa. The skin can be used to tenderize cheaper cuts of meat. The papain however, prevents gelatine from setting, so do not attempt to make a fresh fruit jelly, cold soufflé or mousse with papaya. Papayas which are not fully ripe can be used in salads, while fruit that is still hard is ideal for relishes and jams.

## Medicinal Benefits

1. Consumption of ripe fruit is good for the treatment of ringworms, green fruit treats high blood pressure and is used as an aphrodisiac.
2. The fruit can be directly applied topically to skin sores.
3. The seeds are anti-inflammatory and analgesic and they are used to treat stomach ache and fungal infections.
4. The leaves are used as heart tonic, analgesic and for the treatment of stomach ache.
5. The roots are used as analgesic.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

## About the Author

Vaishali Parekh : I am a Nutritionist by profession and a foodie by nature. The prime object of my website