

African Bush Mango: The Forgotten Fruit

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Summary

African bush mango is a fruit that has been solely known for its seeds in West Africa. The fruit itself is mostly overlooked in most researches and studies. Few researches carried out on the fruit have shown that it is packed with numerous benefits. The medicinal and nutritional properties of this fruit is capable of significantly improving the quality of life when consumed in required quantities

Introduction

African bush mango is an edible fruit that grows on the African tree (*Irvingia gabonensis*) and is native to West and Central Africa. The fruit looks like a mango and it is eaten for its nuts and seeds, which are high in protein and fat. The fruit of this tree has been traditionally used for its nutritional and medicinal properties, and has gained attention in recent years for its potential weight loss benefits. The fruits go through processing to become different food items and beverages (Akubor, 1996). The fresh fruits, which resemble little mangoes and are greenish-yellow in color, are separated into two categories: the "eating type" and the "cooking type" because their flavors can range from sweet to bitter. The *Irvingia wombolu* species, whose seeds are widely processed throughout West Africa but whose mesocarp is bitter and inedible, is the "cooking type." The *Irvingia gabonensis* species is the "eating type" and its seeds are fibrous, have a mesocarp with a sweet taste, and are yellow to orange in color." (Harris, 1996). The oil from the seeds, which is extracted after they have been roasted and consumed, is used in cooking. Locally, they are referred as as Ugiri, Apon and Dika, and they are primarily collected for their seeds, or ogbono, rather than their fruits (Oktay and Sadıkoğlu, 2018).

Mango and African Bush Mango

Mango and African bush mango are two distinct types of fruits with several differences between them. Mango is a popular tropical fruit that is native to South Asia, whereas African

bush mango, also known as *Irvingia gabonensis*, is a fruit that is native to West and Central Africa.

In terms of appearance, mangoes are larger and have a smooth, thin skin that ranges in color from green to yellow to red. On the other hand, African bush mangoes are smaller and have a thicker, tougher skin that ranges in color from green to brown.

Another significant difference between the two fruits is their taste. Mangoes are sweet and juicy, with a flavor that ranges from slightly tart to very sweet. African bush mangoes, on the other hand, have a more sour taste, and their seeds are used to create a paste that is commonly used in African cuisine.



African bush mango

Mango

Finally, there are also differences in the nutritional benefits of the two fruits. Mangoes are high in vitamin C, vitamin A, and fiber, while African bush mangoes are rich in fiber, antioxidants, and healthy fats. Additionally, African bush mangoes are believed to have certain medicinal properties and have been used in traditional African medicine to treat a variety of ailments.

Uses of African Bush Mango

Fruit

The African bush mango fruit has been used for culinary purposes for centuries. Its sweet and tangy flavor makes it a popular ingredient in many dishes. The fruit is rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals, making it a healthy addition to any meal. One of the most popular uses of the African bush mango fruit is in sauces and marinades. Its unique flavor adds depth and complexity to any dish. The fruit can also be used in salads or as a topping for yogurt or ice cream and like many tropical fruits; its pulp is high in vitamin C and carotenoid antioxidants

Seeds

The African bush mango seed is a versatile ingredient that can be used in a variety of dishes, including soups. When using African bush mango seed in soups, it is important to properly prepare the seed by roasting and grinding it into a fine powder. This powder can then be added to the soup as a thickening agent, giving the dish a unique texture and flavor. The seeds can also be roasted and eaten as a snack.

The African bush mango seed has been used for centuries for its medicinal properties. Studies have shown that it can aid in weight loss, lower cholesterol levels, and improve digestion. The seed is also rich in antioxidants and can help boost the immune system.



In addition to its health benefits, the seed is also used in the production of cosmetics and skincare products. Its high levels of fatty acids and vitamin E make it a popular ingredient in moisturizers and anti-aging creams. Overall, the African bush mango seed is a versatile and valuable resource with a wide range of uses (Mateus-Reguengo et al 2020).

Nutritional Properties

The fruit of African Bush Mango is rich in nutrients such as fiber, protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. It is also a good source of antioxidants such as carotenoids, phenolic acids, and flavonoids.

One of the main nutritional properties of African bush mango is its high fiber content. The fruit is rich in both soluble and insoluble fiber, which can help to promote digestive health and prevent constipation. Additionally, the fiber in African bush mango has been shown to help lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease. Another important nutritional property of African bush mango is its high concentration of antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds that help to protect the body against damage from free radicals, which can

contribute to the development of chronic diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's. African bush mango is particularly rich in a type of antioxidant called polyphenols, which have been shown to have a range of health benefits. African bush mango is a good source of plant-based protein, which is important for building and repairing tissues in the body. They are also a rich source of fatty acids, including omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. These nutrients are important for brain function, heart health, and reducing inflammation in the body (Mateus-Reguengo et al 2020).

Medicinal Properties

African Bush Mango has been used traditionally in Africa for its medicinal properties, including the treatment of diarrhea, fever, and pain. The fruit is also used to treat diabetes and high cholesterol levels. One of the most significant benefits of African bush mango is its ability to aid in weight loss. The fruit contains a compound called leptin, which helps to regulate appetite and metabolism. Studies have shown that taking African bush mango supplements can lead to significant weight loss in overweight individuals.

In addition to its weight loss benefits, African bush mango has also been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties. This makes it useful in treating a variety of conditions, including arthritis and other inflammatory diseases. It has also been shown to have a positive effect on cholesterol levels, helping to reduce the risk of heart disease.

Post Harvest Handling and Storage

Proper postharvest handling is crucial to ensure the fruit retains its quality and nutritional value. The first step in postharvest handling is to harvest the fruit at the right stage of maturity. The fruit should be picked when it is fully ripe but still firm. Overripe or under ripe fruits should be discarded as they will not have the desired taste and texture. After harvesting, the fruit should be sorted and graded according to size and quality. Any damaged or diseased fruits should be removed as they can cause spoilage of the entire batch. The fruits should then be washed and dried before packaging.

Additionally, to ensure that they retain their quality and freshness, proper storage is crucial. The fruits should be stored in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. The ideal temperature for storage is between 10-13°C. It is recommended to store the fruits in a well-ventilated area to prevent moisture buildup, which can lead to spoilage. It is also advisable to store the fruits away from other fruits and vegetables to prevent cross-contamination.

Conclusion

African Bush Mango has a long history of use in traditional medicine, and has gained attention in recent years for its potential weight loss and other health benefits. While more research is needed to fully understand the benefits and potential risks of African Bush Mango, it appears to be a promising natural remedy for a range of health concerns.

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