

PINEAPPLE

Pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is the common name for an edible tropical plant and its edible fruit which are coalesced berries. Pineapples are the only bromeliad fruit in widespread cultivation. It can be grown as an ornamental, especially from the leafy tops. Some sources say that the plant will flower after about 24 months & produce a fruit during the following six months while others indicate a 20-month timetable.



Pineapple is eaten fresh or canned or juiced. It is popularly used in desserts, salads, as a complement to meat dishes and in fruit cocktail. The popularity of the pineapple is due to its sweet-sour taste containing 15% sugar and malic and citric fruit acids. It is also high in vitamin B1, B2, B6 and C. The protein digesting enzyme bromelin seems to help digestion at the end of a high protein meal.

The pineapple is an herbaceous short-lived perennial plant which grows to 1.0 to 1.5 meters (3.3 to 4.9 ft) tall. The plant only produces one fruit and then dies. Commercially suckers are cultivated. It has 30 or more fleshy, trough-shaped leaves with sharp spines along the margins 30 to 100 centimeters (1.0 to 3.3 ft) long, surrounding a thick stem. In the first year of growth the axis lengthens and thickens bearing numerous leaves in close spirals. After 12 to 20 months the stem grows into a spike-like inflorescence up to 15 cm long with over 100 spirally arranged, trimerous flowers each subtended by a bract. Flower colors vary, depending on variety, from lavender, through light purple to red.

The ovaries develop into berries which coalesce into a large compact, multiple accessory fruit. The fruit of a pineapple is arranged in two interlocking helices, eight in one direction, thirteen in the other, each being a Fibonacci number.

Pineapple carries out CAM photosynthesis fixing carbon dioxide at night and storing it as the acid malate and then releasing it during the day, aiding photosynthesis.



Nutrition

Pineapple is a good source of manganese (91 %DV in a 1 cup serving), as well as containing significant amounts of vitamin C (94 %DV in a 1 cup serving) and vitamin B1 (8 %DV in a 1 cup serving).

Pineapple contains a proteolytic enzyme bromelain, which breaks down protein. Pineapple juice can thus be used as a marinade and tenderizer for meat. The enzymes in raw pineapples can interfere with the preparation of some foods, such as jelly or other gelatin-based desserts but it breaks down in cooking or the canning process. Though some have claimed pineapple should not be consumed by people with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, or kidney or liver disease the quantity of bromelain in the fruit is probably not medically significant being mostly in the inedible stalk.

Consumers of pineapple have claimed that pineapple has benefits for some intestinal disorders, and others believe it serves as a pain reliever; still others claim that it helps to induce childbirth when a baby is overdue.

Cultivars

Many cultivars have become distributed from its origins in Paraguay and the southern part of Brazil, and later improved stocks were introduced into the Americas, the Azores, Africa, India, Malaysia and Australia.

Varieties include:

- ✓ 'Hilo': A compact 1–1.5 kg (2-3 lb) Hawaiian variant of 'Smooth Cayenne'. The fruit is more cylindrical and produces many suckers but no slips.
- ✓ 'Kona Sugarloaf': 2.5–3 kg (5-6 lb), white flesh with no woodiness in the center. Cylindrical in shape, it has high sugar content but no acid. An unusually sweet fruit.
- ✓ 'Natal Queen': 1–1.5 kg (2-3 lb), golden yellow flesh, crisp texture and delicate mild flavor. Well adapted to fresh consumption. Keeps well after ripening. Leaves spiny. Grown in Australia, Malaysia, and South Africa.



- ✓ 'Pernambuco' ('Eleuthera'): 1–2 kg (2-4 lb) with pale yellow to white flesh. Sweet, melting and excellent for eating fresh. Poorly adapted for shipping. Leaves spiny. Grown in Latin America
- ✓ 'Red Spanish': 1–2 kg (2-4 lb), pale yellow flesh with pleasant aroma; squarish in shape. Well adapted for shipping as fresh fruit to distant markets. Leaves spiny. Grown in Latin America
- ✓ 'Smooth Cayenne': 2.5–3 kg (5-6 lb), pale yellow to yellow flesh. Cylindrical in shape and with high sugar and acid content. Well adapted to canning and processing. Leaves without spines. This is the variety from Hawaii, and the most easily obtainable in U.S. grocery stores. Both 73-114 and 73-50 are of this cultivar.

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