

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*)

By Noris Ledesma
Curator of Tropical Fruit

Jackfruit is believed to be native to India and is cultivated throughout the Far East including India, Burma, the Philippines, southern China and the East Indies. David Fairchild collected a variety in Ceylon which was planted on his property in Coconut Grove. Large and ungainly, this green fruit is covered with spiny protrusions and may weigh upwards of 30 to 70 pounds. Inside the leathery exterior are starchy seeds surrounded by aromatic flesh which, when ripened, is extremely sweet, with a distinctive flavor reminiscent of bananas and 'Juicy Fruit' gum.

This is one of the most versatile fruits I know and here in the subtropics we live in a veritable paradise of unique fruits. Immature, or green, it can be used as a vegetable—stuffed or sautéed with any kind of meat and/or cheese, boiled and mashed, or served in a casserole. Ripe fruit can be served plain, chilled or mixed in a fruit salad. Boiled and roasted, the seeds make tasty snacks. Use your palate as a guide when being creative. Here are 2 recipes to get you started with the largest tree-borne fruit in the world.



Jackfruit Salad (Serves 4) By Leila Barnes

6 cups fresh ripe jack fruit, chopped
Juice of one lime
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup golden raisins
16 ounces sour cream
 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup toasted walnuts – optional

In a large mixing bowl, combine jackfruit, lime juice, coconut, raisins and sour cream.

If, after combining all ingredients, you feel mixture needs more of any of the above, slowly add according to taste.

Mix in toasted walnuts if desired, just before serving.

NOTE: Place walnuts on a cookie sheet, single layer, and toast 8 to 10 minutes in a preheated 300°F oven. Turn walnuts over after 4 or 5 minutes. Let cool before adding to salad.

Jackfruit Casserole

2 small green jackfruits (makes about 2 cups)
2 eggs
1 cup mayonnaise
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 teaspoon of white onion, minced

Peel and chop the jackfruits, removing the seeds. Boil for 30 minutes and change the water. Boil one more time for 30 minutes, drain. Preheat oven to 450°F. In a medium bowl, beat eggs. Blend in mayonnaise and cream of mushroom soup. Stir in cheese, minced onion and jackfruit. Turn into a two-quart casserole. Bake for 45 minutes.