



ThaiLife

Thailand's Exotic Fruits

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Contents

Preface	3
Fruits in Early Siam	4
Fruit Cycle	8
Fruits for Export	21
Some Fruits and Their Uses	56
Fruits in Social and Religious Ceremonies	62
Fruits in Thai Cuisine	65
Conclusion	76





Preface

Thailand has long been known as the rice-bowl of the world, being one of the leading exporters of rice. However, little is known about another major produce of this fertile land — fruits. Thai fruits have never ceased to bewilder visitors to the country, not only on account of their rich variety, but also on account of their perennial abundance, quality and versatility.

This publication brings together various articles on the subject from several viewpoints, ranging from a foreign visitor's impression in the past, a contemporary review of all the major fruits, to their religious and culinary significance and export statistics, culminating in a descriptive list of popular fruits.

Although the subject is far from being exhaustively treated, it is hoped that this modest attempt will give a general picture of our native fruits of which we are justly proud.

National Identity Board,
Prime Minister's Office,
Bangkok, Thailand.
October, 1986.

FRUITS IN EARLY SIAM

THE VARIETY OF THAI FRUITS has long fascinated visitors to Thailand, to which colourful photographs and exotic accounts always bear witness. Even late in the seventeenth century Simon de Laloubère, an envoy from the French court, whose book *The Kingdom of Siam* has become one of the major non-Thai historical documents on the Ayutthaya period, gave a detailed description of the fruits he encountered as follows:

"The Indian figs, which the Siamese call elephants' trunks (*clouey-ngouan chang*), have not the taste of our figs, and are, in my opinion, not so good. The Siamese melons likewise are not real melons, but the fruit of a tree known in the American Islands by the name of papaya. The fig is of the size and shape of a sausage. The green skin, which becomes dark, separates easily from the flesh; and it has none of those little pips which are like specks of gravel in our figs. Its taste is strong, and is at the same time sour and sweet.

"The banana the Siamese call *clouey-ngau-chang*, or elephant's tooth; it is longer and greener than the fig. These fruits hang in bunches from the top of the trees. The bananas exposed to heat become like dried apples.

"The guava, (in Siamese, *loue kiae*) is about the size of an apple. The skin is greyish green, and beneath it the fruit is about the consistence of a lemon, but not so white. It at first tastes like strawberries, but it is much stronger. This flesh is of the thickness of a crown-piece, and contains a liquid full of little pips.

"The jac (in Siamese, *ca-noun*) is of the shape of a large melon. They have a grey skin, and contain a great number of pips or kernels, which are about the size of a pigeon's egg. These, when roasted, are like our chestnuts. The fruit is yellow and succulent, of a sweet taste and a powerful smell.

"They preserve a fruit like plums; it has the taste of a medlar, and has sometimes two and three stones, larger than those of the medlar. They call it *moussida*.

"The heart-of-beef is so called from its size and shape; the skin is thin, and within it there is a material like white cream, very pleasant. They call it *mancout*.

"The durian (in Siamese, *tourrien*) has a most disagreeable odour. It is of the size of a melon, covered with prickles. It contains several shells, within which is the fruit; and fewer of these shells the better is the fruit, but there are rarely fewer than three.

"The mango (in Siamese, *ma mouan*) has the taste of the peach and apricot, but stronger. They are sometimes as big as a child's hand; they are flat and oval, in the shape of an almond. The skin is like that of a nectarine, with a yellowish colour; and the fruit itself is like a pulp, and covers a large stone.

"The Siamese have acid fruits with which they quench their thirst; they are in the shape of plums.

"The tamarind is also sour, and has a covering like the almond, and many of them again are inside a husk. The syrup is very agreeable, but receives the taste of the pimperl by long keeping.

"I speak nothing about sugar or pepper, as I have not seen them. The pepper hangs down in little berries like currants.

"The anana (in Siamese, *separat*) tastes like our nectarine. They say it is unhealthy, as its juice eats into iron. Its shape is that of a large fir-apple. The plant which produces it is only three feet high. Sometimes there spring from the large one, one or two smaller fruits. Each plant bears but one fruit.



“The coco (in Siamese, *ma pr’au*) is a nut, but very large. In the wood of the coco is a very agreeable liquor, which, as the fruit ripens, congeals, and forms a very agreeable beverage.”

Although these descriptions were recorded some three centuries ago, all of the fruits mentioned can still be found in Thailand today. The tastes of the fruits may not fit Laloubère’s descriptions exactly and the delicacy of the fruits depends on personal preference, but their fascination and popularity still remains.

Over the years fruitologists have worked to develop more varieties of the fruits mentioned and to-day a thornless variety of durian, for example, has been cultivated, without affecting the taste, making it easier for handling and more convenient for export.

Thai cooks continue to come up with mouth-watering recipes for their favourite fruits and foreign visitors to Thailand still compliment these exotic fruits and take with them memories of the days spent happily savouring their unique taste.



(Upper) Durian — Famed for its pungent odour, the durian is claimed by many to be the King of Fruits.

(Lower) Jackfruit — Beneath the rough exterior is concealed a sweet and succulent fruit.



Mangoes of many different varieties can be found growing in every region of Thailand.



(Upper) Pineapples grown in Thailand are famed for their juicy sweetness.



(Lower) Watermelons can be found in the market all year round.

FRUIT CYCLE



The small, dark purple fruit of the mangosteen tree is abundant between May and July.

ANOTHER ARTICLE on Thai fruits? They're almost ubiquitous as the fruit itself. But in this one I'll try to spare you the tedious botanical minutiae that usually accompany descriptions of Thailand's world famous family of fruits. In fact, let's just stick with the ten all-time favourites, a Greatest Hits List, as it were, assembled during an informal poll of a motley collection of fruit sellers at Pratunam. (If you suspect that the list is actually made up of the writer's personal favourites,



Litchi, eaten fresh or preserved, are always considered a delicacy.



(Upper) Durian ripening on the tree.

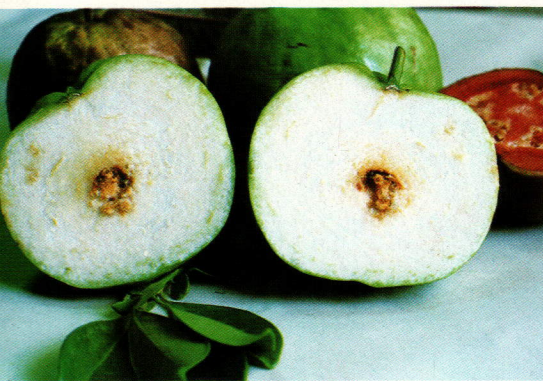


(Lower) Durian packed for the market.

(Upper Right) Durian ready for sale.

(Lower Right) Guava packed for the market.





you wouldn't be at all wrong.) I actually tried to keep the list exotic yet useful. There are some Thai fruits with romantic tales linked to their names yet no one is quite sure what they taste like and people have rarely seen them sold. They're apparently more fun to talk about than to eat. For this reason I've chosen ten fruits that you'd be hard pressed to find in a supermarket in Iowa City on any given Sunday afternoon. Yet, in season, all are easy to find anywhere in Thailand. Most of the fruits discussed here ripen between March and August, with the exception of the papaya which is available all year round.

So what are their names? Well, there's mangosteen, rambutan, durian, litchi...sounds like the team line-up for a rugby squad from Fiji... "Jackfruit at fullback, Breadfruit at scrum, and finally there's Guava who's been out most of the season with a spinal injury at centreback." But the scientific names are most fun. "Garcinia Longana" sounds like a hit man for the Mafia... "Artocarpus heterophyllus" — a quiche-eating dinosaur... "Psidium guajava" — "Greek Temple of Coffee"... and finally "Durio zibethinus" — sounds like the latest cartoon creation from Japan.

To start with, let's look at the mangosteen, known as *mangkhut* in Thai. This is a small, dark purple fruit, roughly the size of a racquet ball, with a brownish crown. The flesh is white and it has a sweet, slightly tart flavour. The texture resembles that of a tangerine or mandarin orange. Mangosteens ripen in May and the season lasts until July.

Left:

Guava growing in an orchard.

Red and white varieties of guava.

Seedless guava.

Right:

White guava ripening on the tree.

Red guava ripening on the tree.

Red and white guava.

An interesting story accompanies the naming of the mangosteen. As the story goes an old fruit seller was sitting at the market stall with her fruit spread out before her when a farang happened by. "Oh my!" said the farang smiling blithely as he pointed to the pyramid of purple mangosteens, "what are these called?" "Mangkhut!" replied the fruit seller. "Oh, MANGO," said the rather deaf farang. The fruit seller shook her head, waved her hands and said "Mangkhut! MANGKHUT!" "Yes, yes I know," answered the farang in a derisive manner, "you mean MANGO!" Frustrated, the fruit seller gave the daft farang a sidelong glance and muttered "mango-son-teen!" a rather bitter Thai epithet which, roughly translated, means "Mangos my foot!" after hearing this, the farang shouted in triumph... "Oh, now I know... MANGOSTEEN!"

A little guessing game can be played with mangosteens. There are a number of flat lobes around the stem and on the bottom of the fruit. These lobes correspond exactly to the number of segments inside. Since most Thais already know this trick you'll have to astound your foreign friends. One more item... the more segments a fruit has the fewer seeds there are. Just take care in peeling them, the purple dye in the skin can stain your clothes.

Next on the list is the litchi. In season from April to May... Litchi season is eagerly anticipated by many in Thailand and no small amount of money is paid to secure them. During the end of the season many litchi fanatics travel up north to Chiang Mai where there are always a few more left towards the end of the season and where the price is generally cheaper. Price: 60-70 baht, doubles at the end of the season. The taste is sweet with just a slight trace of tartness and they are very juicy with a texture somewhat like that of a pear. The outside of the fruit has a hard, red skin with short small thorns. Litchi are ideal for canning and this makes them available in Thailand throughout the entire year. But beware! Litchis can be addictive. You too may find yourself fishing out your last 100 baht note for one of the neatly wrapped bundles (when sold, the fruit is left on the branches so that they will last longer).

Fruit number three on the list is durian, reputed by some to be the king of fruits and villified by others (mostly farangs with naive palates) to be a prickly, green stink bomb.



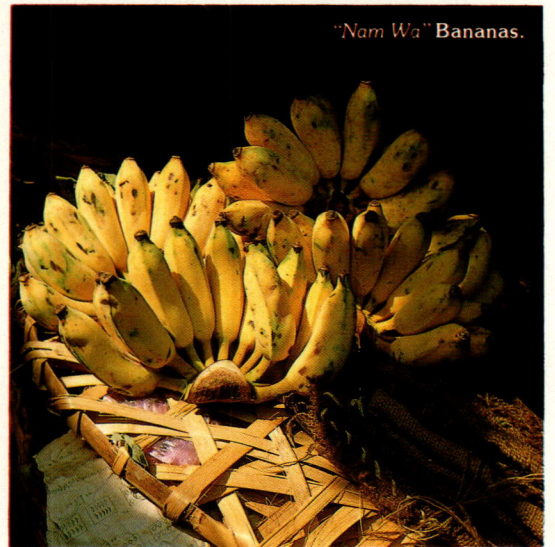
Bananas.



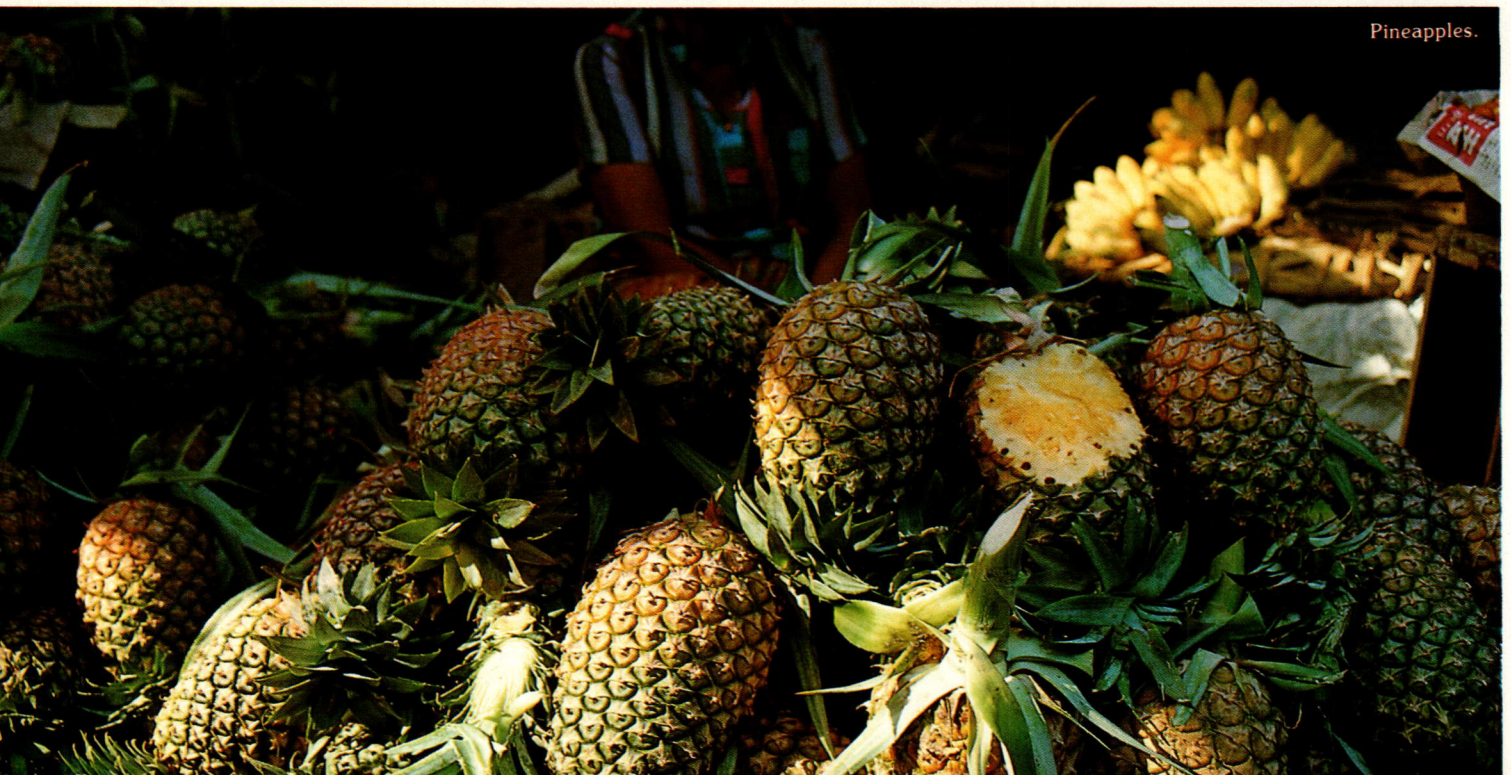
White Grapes.



Egg Banana.



"Nam Wa" Bananas.



Pineapples.



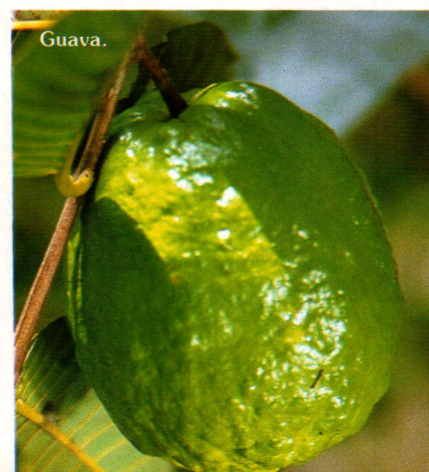
Different kinds of fruits.



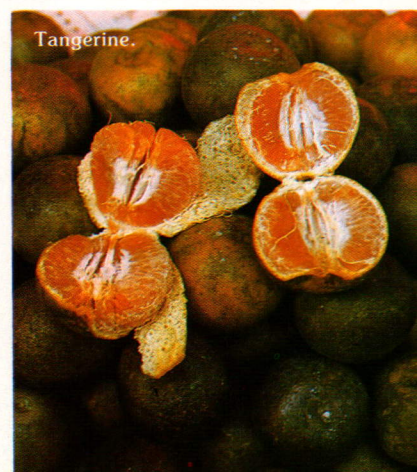
Different fruits packed for the market.



Tangerine.



Guava.



Tangerine.

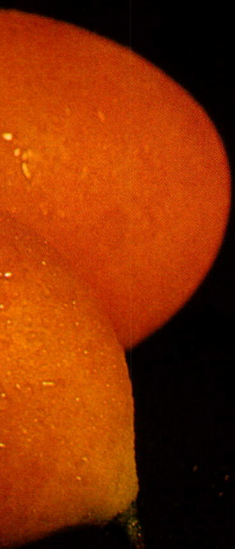


Durian.



Sweet Tamarind.





Garsluria



Pomelo.



Coconut.



Rose Apple.



Bael Fruit

Durian season begins in May and continues through July. The durian itself resembles a medieval torture device. Roughly oval in shape, durians are commonly 8 inches long and seven inches wide. They may vary in colour from olive green to a yellowish hue. Outside is where the danger lies. Covering the thick-skinned durian are dozens of thick, sharp, pointed spikes. Each spike is slightly angled and tapered to a hard point. It is often said that it is wise to never bargain too fiercely with a durian seller as she has a ready weapon at her disposal for those who arouse her displeasure. All agree that the fruit has a strong smell but few go so far as the British adventurer of the 1800s who described the experience of eating durian as "akin to eating herring and bleu cheese over an open sewer." Kinder descriptions refer to a distinctly garlic flavour, others say cheese, still others compare it to mild onions.

Many are put off either by the smell or by the unsavoury descriptions of its flavour. While not quite as exotic (repulsive?) as goat tripe, eye of newt, or pig's knuckles, durian is an acquired taste and should be given a chance. On your first attempt it is recommended that you eat it in the open air (and preferably not on your first ocean cruise). It is very rich and only a small portion should be eaten at first.

According to connoisseurs of the fruit, the best durian come from Thailand. There are many different kinds of durian and experts can choose the choicest varieties at a glance.

The guava, or *farang* as it is known in Thailand, originally came from Spain. Today they are grown throughout Malaysia and Thailand and are often seen in people's private gardens. The fruit is rich in vitamins A, B and C and ascorbic acid. Guava's have a thick green skin which yellows as it ripens. Guavas are available all year long. Everyone enjoys the juicy taste



(Upper) The sweet and juicy fruit of the hairy rambutan is common in Thailand.

(Lower) The ripe tender fruit of the papaya.



of guavas and it is not uncommon to see farangs, hot and sweaty after a day of touring Bangkok, eating farangs.

Rambutan, or *ngo* in Thai, is a sweet, juicy fruit very common in Thailand. It is thought to be native to Malaysia although it has been cultivated in Thailand for as long as anyone can remember. The fruit is soft, white and juicy and it contains one tasteless seed which is edible.

The outside can be either green and red or red and yellow depending on the type. All varieties have long hair which makes them look like fuzzy creatures from a sci-fi cartoon rather than a delicious fruit full of vitamin C. Ants love to crawl all over this hairy fruit so be sure to 'dust' them off before you peel them.

The papaya tree bears fruit all year long. The fruit itself is from 6-14 inches long and has a smooth green skin before ripening. Once ripe it turns a yellow or orange colour and becomes flushed with red. The central part is hollow and full of small, black wrinkled seeds. The flower of the papaya varies with its colour. A deep red colour has a juicier, sweeter taste than the lighter coloured portions. Papaya is actually a native of Mexico brought to the Philippines by the Spaniards and not long after that to Malaysia and Thailand. They grow rapidly and can produce fruits in six months from seeds. Raw papaya is rich in Vitamin A and also has a high calcium content. Papaya leaves are sometimes used as a meat tenderiser.

A popular Thai dish, '*som tam*', a spicy, hot salad, is made from unripe papaya. It is probably one of the most labour-intensive meals made in Thailand. Perhaps you have seen the ladies perched on stools with their machetes diligently hacking away at a green papaya, striking it longitudinally to produce long, thin strands which are later poured into a mortar and pestled to death along with dried shrimp, garlic and chillis. It's the only salad made that's guaranteed to send smoke curling out of your ears.

In season from March through May, mangoes, *mamuang* in Thai, are eaten green and raw (sour) or yellow and ripe (sweet).



Mangoes ripening on trees.



The sweet smelling succulent jackfruit.



Longan — common between July-August.



Breadfruit.

The tree is large and can be seen in the private gardens of many homes. Be careful when you go to pick one, however. The fruit is sometimes crawling with dozens of unfriendly fire ants which make their nests inside a cluster of four or five mangoes. Some mango trees produce all year round. A favourite Thai dessert called “*khao nieo mamuang*” is made from ripe mangoes and glutinous (sticky) rice. Thais tend to prefer the sour-tasting green mango which they cut up into bite-size pieces and dip into salt.

Breadfruit is well-known for its association with the ill-fated ‘Bounty’. The British ship experienced a “famous mutiny” while taking young breadfruit trees on a voyage from Tahiti to the West Indies.

An interesting old wives’ tale in Thailand holds that a man afflicted with VD should not eat breadfruit. Consequently, sales of breadfruit generally plummet around Valentine’s Day.

High season is May to June. Breadfruit, when eaten raw, is flavourless. Full of carbohydrates, it is the staple diet of Polynesians, much like rice in Asia or potatoes in America. It is used for making sweets in Thailand and is sometimes stewed in syrup and coconut milk for a tasty, filling desert.

Jackfruit. The name is apparently derived from a Malay word which the Portugese gave this fruit when they first saw it in India. When ripe, jackfruit are oblong, 12-25 inches and 10-20 inches across. The skin is yellow and covered with small, angled pimples...resembling a durian with its dangerous thorns snapped off. Ripe jackfruit, *khanun* in Thai, has a strong smell rather like a durian but sweeter. The seeds taste like chestnuts but must be boiled first.

The jackfruit tree itself produces a yellow dye, the timber is strong and useful and there are medicinal uses for the tree as well.

Longan. High season, July-August. You know when longans are in season without looking at the calendar because the sidewalks (and classroom floors) are littered with the wide, round reddish-brown seeds. They are very shiny and look almost like enameled trinkets you see in department stores. The flavour is quite sweet, somewhat like litchis, although not quite as juicy. The skin of the longan is thin, brown and crispy which makes it very easy to peel.

FRUITS FOR EXPORT



Background:

Thailand, located in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, between a longitude of 97°E-106°E and a latitude of 5°N-21°N, covers an area of approximately 513,115 sq.km. The country has a tropical climate with a high humidity and, in some seasons, is effected by monsoons, particularly in the southern part of the country.

There are three seasons in Thailand, namely:

Hot Season	March to May
Rainy Season	June to October
Cool Season	November to February

In 1981 a total 121.29 million rai (58.52 hectare) of land was used as farm holding land. Of this area, 9.41% was used for growing fruit trees and tree crops while another 0.24% was used for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers.

Production

The humid climate and fertile soil conditions makes it possible for many different types of fruits to be grown in Thailand. These include

such fruits as pineapple, mango, durian, longan, rambutan, sugar apple, guava, pomelo and jackfruit. Fruits are constantly being developed to improve the taste and quality and new varieties of guava, grapes and durian, for example, have been produced.

Important growing areas are:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Grapes | — Grown mostly in Nakhon Pathom, Ratchaburi and Samut Sakhon |
| Mangoes | — Grown especially in Chiang Mai and Si Sa Ket |
| Durian | — Grown in Nonthaburi, Rayong and Chanthaburi |
| Longan | — Grown mostly in northern provinces, particularly Chiang Mai and Lamphun |
| Rambutan | — Grown mostly in Chanthaburi and southern provinces such as Surat Thani |
| Sugar Apple | — Grown mostly in the northern part of central provinces such as Petchabun and Nakhon Ratchasima |
| Pomelo | — Grown in every province, particularly Nakhon Pathom, Surat Thani and Trang |



- Jack Fruit — Grown in every province, particularly Chon Buri, Uttaradit and Nakhon Ratchasima
- Tamarind — Grown mostly in the northeast and in Nan and Chaiyaphum Provinces.
- Sappodilla — Grown mostly in Chon Buri, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Sukhothai and Nakhon Sawan

The area of land set aside for cultivation of fruits, together with yields, is set out below.

Agricultural land for fruit cultivation and yields for production year 1981-1982.

Type of Fruit	Area of land for Cultivation (rai)	Yield (ton)
Coconut	2,963,723	1,779,281
Lime	254,588	74,783
Mango	1,144,074	517,348
Tamarind	338,255	185,008
Mangosteen	75,698	61,991
Longan	82,703	21,806
Litchi	35,413	7,992
Sappodilla	143,874	80,213
Lansat	100,099	95,240
Durian	358,914	139,074
Rambutan	360,187	432,989
Grapes	27,250	59,147
Sugar Apple	350,906	183,421
Rose Apple	27,624	32,772
Guava	159,241	99,082
Santol	27,272	17,224
Oranges	258,022	458,225
Pomelo	96,750	46,820
Sweet Banana*	202,524	105,128
"Nam Wah"		
Banana*	1,114,328	471,553
Egg Banana*	156,100	57,818
Jack Fruit	228,227	49,422

*These are varieties of banana grown in Thailand, however, the Sweet Banana (Kluai Hom) is normally exported much more than other kinds.

Source: Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.





Jackfruit canned for export.

Export:

Thailand is one of Asia's most important fruit and vegetable producing countries capable of supplying markets in neighbouring countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Brunei as well as countries in the Middle East, Europe, America and Japan.

In the year 1983 Thailand exported more than 14 varieties of fresh and dried vegetables weighing 28,545 tons at a value of 180.193 million baht (U.S.\$6.67 million, 27 baht = U.S.\$1) and more than 30 types of fresh and dried fruits weighing 65,060 tons at a value of 707.172 million baht (U.S.\$26.19 million)

Fresh and dried vegetables exported include bamboo shoots, eschallots, tomatoes, mushrooms and truffle, while fresh and dried vegetables include longans, papaya, durian, oranges, pomeloes, bananas and grapes.

The quantity and value of fruits exported is shown in the following table.

Quantity and Value of Fruits Exported in 1983.

Type of Fruit	Quantity Exported (kg.)	Value (Million Baht)
Fresh Bananas	9,654,541	25.069
Fresh Mangoes	2,538,080	20.876
Fresh Pineapples	249,002	2.617
Fresh Avocadoes, Guava and Mangosteens	411,633	2.943
Dried Bananas	32,500	1.368
Dried Pineapple	473,153	20.193
Dried Avocadoes, Guava and Mangosteen	84,635	1.807
Lemons and Limes	187,749	2.202
Mandarines, Tangerines, Satsumas and Clementines.	198,920	1.318
Pomeloes	2,657,246	27.346
Fresh Grapes	1,342,612	20.539
Fresh Longans	7,320,032	207.154
Fresh Watermelon	958,109	1.069
Fresh Rambutan	273,063	3.554
Durian	2,819,088	64.443
Sugar Apple	844,902	5.590
Papaya	16,398,094	82.456
Dessicated Coconut	553,466	1.528

Left:

Mangoes.

White grapes.

"Nom Wa" variety of banana.

Source: Department of Customs, Ministry of Finance.

In addition to exporting fresh fruits, Thailand is also an important manufacturer and exporter of modified fruits and canned fruits, particularly of canned pineapple of which Thailand is the world's second largest exporter next only to the Philippines. In the year 1983 Thailand exported 135,795 tons of canned pineapple at a value of 1,871.3 million baht. Other canned fruits, such as canned rambutan, canned litchi, canned longans, etc., are also finding a rapidly increasing market in such European countries as West Germany where canned fruits from Thailand occupy a large part of the market.



FRUIT CYCLE IN THAILAND

FRUIT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bananas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Toddy Palm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sumac			—	—	—							
Tangerines	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grapes (Green)	—	—										
Grapes (Red)	—	—										
Papaya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lemons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Coconut	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pineapple	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guavas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Water Melon	—	—										
Mangoes			—	—	—							
Durian					—	—						
Longans						—	—	—				
Mangosteen					—	—						
Rambutans						—	—					
Sugar Apple								—	—			
Pomelo									—	—		
Langsat									—	—		
Jujube	—											—
Rose Apple						—	—	—	—			
Santol					—	—						
Jack Fruit			—	—								
Mandarines								—	—			
Strawberries	—	—	—	—								—
Tamarind	—											
Litchi					—	—						
Sapodilla	—	—	—	—	—	—						

Source:

Department of Agricultural Extension Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

EXPORTERS OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

1. Bangkok Business Agencies
446 Mu 9, Soi Thira, Pracha-Uthit Road,
Ratburana, Bangkok, 10140. Telex: TH
81038
2. Boonrat Porkapand Ltd. Part.,
152 Choeng Saphan Phut, Chakraphet
Road, Bangkok, 10200.
3. Dismark Ltd. Part.
21 Soi Dismark, Maha Chak Road, Bangkok.
4. Ekaraj Development Co. Ltd.,
Room 706, 7th Fl., Bangkok Union Insurance
Bldg., 175-177 Surawong Road., Bangkok,
10500.
5. House of Products Ltd., Part.,
99/30 Soi Muban 99 Ngamwongwan,
Ngamwongwan Road, Bangkok, Bangkok,
10900. Telex: 82164 BVT TH
6. Laemthong Enterprise Inc.
9-11 Suan Laemthong-Khlongtan, Phatthana-
kan Road, Phrakhanong. Bangkok, 10110.
Telex: 87654 SUNITRA
7. Midas Enterprise Co. Ltd.,
7/7 Lat Phrao Road, Soi 34 Lat Phrao,
Bangkhen, Bangkok, 10900.
8. Mixmat Bangkok Enterprise Ltd., Part.,
P.O. Box 9-68, 196/55 Mu 1, Viphavadee
Rangsit Road, Sikan, Bangkhen, Bangkok,
10900.
9. P.E.C. Siam Enterprise Co. Ltd.,
544/1 6th Fl. Parinya Bldg., Phloen Chit
Road. Pathumwan, Bangkok, 10500.
10. Pimvana Ltd., Part.,
436/2-3 Ekamai Road, Phrakhanong,
Bangkok, 10110.
11. Pisitchai International Ltd. Part.,
4 Soi Pradit, Surawong Road, Bangkok,
10500 Telex: 82122 FRUITFU TH
12. Rama Foods Co. Ltd.,
9/5 Phlapphla Chai Road, Pomprap,
Bangkok, 10100 Telex: RMS 84229 TH
13. S.A.M. Co. Ltd.,
3151 Somdet Chaophraya Road,
Khlong San, Bangkok, 10600.
14. Siam Pattana Trading International Ltd. Part.,
34/28 Mu 2 Sukha 1 Road, Bang Khae,
Phasi Charoen, Bangkok, 10160. Telex:
82086 TH ATTN: USA/SPT
15. Sukho Enterprise Co. Ltd.,
7 Soi Prachum, Surawong Road, Bangkok,
10500. Telex: TH 2394 BULPAKDI
16. Sunrise Co., Ltd.,
15/1 Sukhumvit 41 Road, Phrakhanong,
Bangkok, 10110.

17. Thai Dyna Import Export Co., Ltd.,
2423/30 Sukhumvit Soi 97/1 Sukhumvit
Road, Bang Chak, Phrakhanong, Bangkok,
10250. Telex: THC TH 82354 ATTN 018
18. Thai Hengly International Co., Ltd.,
178 Surawong Road, Bangkok, 10500.
Telex: 83465 TAIENLY TH.
19. World Import Export and Commerce Co.,
Ltd.,
469/16-17 Ratchadaphisek Road, Chong
Nonsi, Yannawa, Bangkok, 10120. Telex:
82965 TH.
20. World Orchids Co., Ltd.,
55/15 Soi Chusang, Phetkasem 41 Road,
Bang Khae, Phasi Charoen, Bangkok, 10160.

EXPORTERS OF FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

1. Aran Trading Co., Ltd.,
787/21 Itsaraphap Road., Bangkok, 10600.
Telex: TH 81036 ATTN: PARANEE
2. Four Seas Trading Co., Ltd.,
365/17-18 Si Phraya Road, Bang Rak,
Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 8209 NUSAN TH
3. Midas Enterprise Co. Ltd.
"mentioned previously"
4. S.C. Enterprise Co., Ltd.,
1080/41 Chan Road., Yannawa, Bangkok,
10120.
5. Sinhu Cold Storage Co., Ltd.,
302 Silom Road, Bang Rak, Bangkok,
10500. Telex: SINHUCO TH 82521.
6. Sumont Trading,
349/16 Soi Sankaloet, Lat Yao, Bangkhen,
Bangkok, 10900. Telex: 82938
TH MONTIEN.
7. Sun Yang Food Co., Ltd.,
54-56 Chalermet 2 Road, Bangkok, 10100.
Telex: 87635 CROWENCO TH.
8. Willimex Enterprises Ltd.,
365/17-18 Si Phraya Road, Bang Rak,
Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 82096 NUSAN TH.

EXPORTERS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (DEHYDRATED OR DRIED)

1. Bangkok Business Agencies,
446 Mu 9 Soi Thira, Pracha-Uthit Road,
Ratburana, Bangkok, 10140. Telex: TH
81038
2. East Point International Co., Ltd.,
137 Wireless Road, Bangkok, 10500. Telex:
TH 81039

3. Four Seas Trading Co., Ltd.,
"mentioned previously"
4. Great Food (Dehydration) Co., Ltd.,
365/17-18 Si Phraya Road, Bang Rak,
Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 82096 UNSAN TH.
5. Midas Enterprise Co., Ltd.
"mentioned previously"
6. Mixmat Bangkok Enterprise Ltd. Part.,
"mentioned previously"
7. P. Prosper Ltd. Part.,
5 Soi Nomchit, Naret Road, Si Phraya,
Bang Rak, Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 81067
PERPROS TH.
8. Thai Rama Enterprise. Ltd. Part.
G.P.O. Box 2628, Bangkok.
9. World Import Export and Commerce Co. Ltd.
"mentioned previously"

EXPORTERS OF CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

1. Bangkok Business Agencies.
"mentioned previously"
2. Calat International Trade Co., Ltd.,
405/8 Taksin Road, Bangkok, 10600.
Telex: TH 82081 ATTN: CALINTER.
3. Champaca Co., Ltd.,
142/4 Soi Suksawittaya, North Sathon
Road, Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 87295
CHAMP TH.
4. Compact Investment Co., Ltd.,
1212/1 Rama IV Road, Khlong Toei,
Phrakhanong, Bangkok, 10110. Telex:
87934 COMPACT TH.
5. East Point International Co., Ltd.,
"mentioned previously"
6. Erawan Marketing Co., Ltd.,
1774/77 Charansanitwong 63, Bangkok Noi,
Bangkok, 10700. Telex: 87234 PANHENG
TH.
7. Four Seas Tradings Co., Ltd.,
"mentioned previously"
8. German ASEAN EXPRESS Co. Ltd.,
937-939 Sukhumvit Soi 51, Bangkok,
10110. Telex: 82009 YBTFMX TH.
9. Hagemeyer (Thailand) Ltd.,
719 Si Phraya Road, Bang Rak, Bangkok,
10500. Telex: 82920 HAGTHAI TH.
10. Hassan & Associates Ltd. Part.,
1st Fl. Thai Financial Development Bldg.,
42 Surawong Road, Bangkok, 10500.
Telex: TRAOCEAN TH 82865
11. Henry Gordon Ltd. Part.,
140/5 Phetchaburi Road, Phayathai District,
Bangkok, 10400. Telex: 82200 PSA TH
'HENGORDON'

12. House of Products Ltd. Part.,
"mentioned previously"
13. Herdis-PB International (Thailand) Co., Ltd.,
15 Sukhumvit Road, Soi 4 (Nana Tai),
Bangkok. Telex: 82448 LESHAPD TH
and 87220 PATTAMA TH.
14. Inter Imex Co., Ltd.,
406 Akhan Songkhro, Thung Wat Don,
Yannawa, Bangkok, 10120.
15. J.A. Momin & Sons Co., Ltd.,
565-567 Wanit (Wat Ko), Samphanthawong,
Bangkok, 10100. Telex: 87687 LEETHAI
TH ATTN: MOMIN
16. Louis Food Co., Ltd.,
11/16 Petchaburi Road, Bangkok, 10400.
17. Luxco Foods Co., Ltd.,
1075 Charoen Nakhon, Bang Lamphu Lang,
Khlong San, Bangkok, 10600. Telex: 87635
CROWNCO TH.
18. Mason Trading Ltd. Part.,
140/5 Petchaburi Road, Phayathai District,
Bangkok, 10400.
19. Mit Siam International Ltd.,
138 Silom Road, 6th Fl. Boonmitr Bldg.,
Bangkok, 10500. Telex: 82362 TH.
20. Nana Marketing Co. Ltd.,
1909/235 Charansanitwong Road Soi 65,
Bang Phlat, Bangkok Noi, Bangkok, 10700.
Telex: 87234 PANHENG TH.
21. Pan Asia Food Industry Co., Ltd.,
1193 2nd Fl. Phahonyothin Road, Bangkok,
10400. Telex: 87233 PAN ASIA TH.
22. Ratana Porn Phan Ltd. Part.
1/24 Lat Ya Road, Khlong San, Bangkok,
10600.
23. Roong Wattana,
265/10 Soi Thawi Watthana, Sathupradit,
Yannawa, Bangkok, 10120. Telex: 82151
SBC TH.
24. S.A.M. Co., Ltd.
"mentioned previously"
25. Siam Agro-Industry (Pineapple) Co., Ltd.,
138 Silom Road, Surawong, Bangkok,
10500. Telex: 82078 SAICO TH.
26. Siam Food Products Co., Ltd.,
183 Sukhumvit Road, Phatra Thanakit
Bldg., 6th Fl., Bangkok, 10110. Telex:
TH 82985
27. Sira Co., Ltd.,
1/2 Trok Bang Kwan (Banmai Market),
Yannawa, Bangkok, 10120.
28. Thai International Commercial Ltd. Part.,
286/74 Surawong Road, Bangkok, 10500.
29. The Commercial Company of Siam Ltd.,
38 Oriental Avenue, Bang Rak, Bangkok,
10500. Telex: 82377 CCS TH.

30. The Thai Pineapple Co., Ltd.,
118/1 Rama VI Road, Samsen Nai, Bangkok,
10400. Telex: 81059 TIPCO TH.
31. The Unicord Investment (Thailand) Co., Ltd.,
76 Chaloe Kit 1, Pom Prap, Bangkok,
10100. Telex: 27397 UNICORD TH.
32. Tropico Enterprise Ltd. Part.,
1/13 Soi Santiphap, Naret Road, Si Phraya,
Bang Rak, Bangkok, 10500.
33. UMC International Corporation,
177-179 UFM Bldg., Ratchawong Road.,
Samphanthawong, Bangkok, 10100. Telex:
72232 UMC TH, 82230 UMC TH.
34. Unithai Products Corporation Ltd.,
28-28/1 Sukhumvit 19, Phrakhanong,
Bangkok, 10110. Telex: 82610 MPM BKK
TH.
35. Universal Food Co., Ltd.,
16 Convent Road, Silom, Bangkok, 10500.
36. Universal Products (Thailand) Co., Ltd.,
21/30-32 Phlapphla Chai Road, Thepsirin,
Pom Prap, Bangkok, 10100.
37. Wit Thai International Co., Ltd.,
133 Sukhumvit 21 (Asok)
Bangkok, 10110. Telex: 82136 WITTIBK
TH.
38. World Seas Co., Ltd.,
356/5-6 Mittraphap Road, July 22 Circle,
Pom Prap, Bangkok, 10100. Telex: 84417
THONG TH.

FACILITATING OFFICES

1. All Royal Thai Embassies and Consulate-
General Offices.
2. Export Service Centre,
22/77 Ratchadaphisek-Lat Phrao Road,
Bangkhen, Bangkok, 10900.
3. Thai Packaging Centre,
Thailand Institute of Scientific and Techno-
logical Research, 196 Phahonyothin Road,
Bangkhen, Bangkok, 10900. Tel: 579-1121
-30. Cable: TISTR
4. Thai Fruits and Vegetables Exporters Association,
298/14 Phitsanulok Road, Bangkok, 10300.
Tel: 281-9268.



Durian.



Mango



Sappodilla



Garsluria.



Bananas.

Some Common Thai Fruits



- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Thai name | — Linchi |
| Common name | — Litchi or Lychee |
| Scientific name | — <i>Litchi chinensis</i> Sonn |
| Growing zones | — Upper North, Central |
| Fruiting Season | — April - May |
| Edible part | — Pulp |
| Usage | — 1. Eaten as fresh fruits
2. Canning |
| Taste | — Sweet with slightly acid |



Thai name — Som-o
 Common name — Pummelo or Pomelo
 Scientific name — *Citrus grandis* Osbeck
 Growing zones — Lower North, Central
 Usage — Eaten as fresh fruits
 Taste — Sweet or sweet with insipid

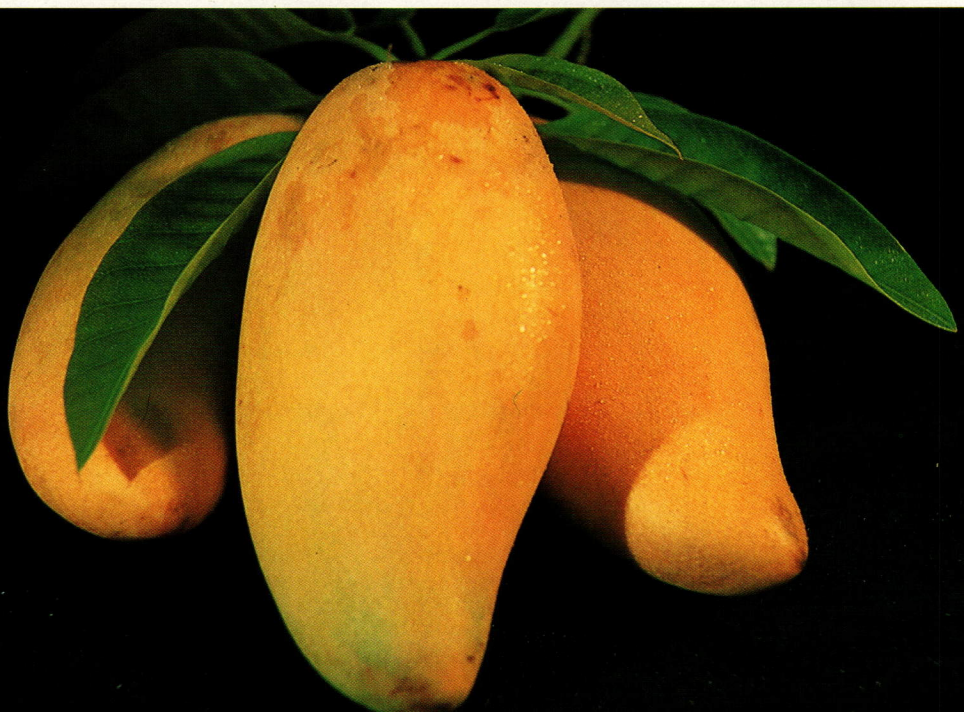




Thai name	— Kluai hom thong
Common name	— Banana
Scientific name	— <i>Musa</i> spp
Growing zones	— Central, South
Fruiting season	— All year round
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruit
Taste	— Sweet



Thai name	— Langsat
Common name	— Lansat
Scientific name	— <i>Lansium domesticum</i> Jack
Growing zones	— Lower North, East, South
Fruiting season	— September
Edible Part	— Pulp
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruit
Taste	— Sweet with slightly acid





- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Thai name | — Mamuang |
| Common name | — Mango |
| Scientific name | — <i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn. |
| Growing zones | — North, Northeast, Central, East. |
| Fruiting season | — April - June |
| Usage | — Can be eaten as green or riped fruits. |
| Taste | — Sour or sweet |

Thai name	— Ngo
Common name	— Rambutan
Scientific name	— <i>Nephelium lappaceum</i> Linn
Growing zones	— East, South
Fruiting season	— May - August
Usage	— 1. Eaten as fresh fruits 2. Canning
Taste	— Sweet and crispy



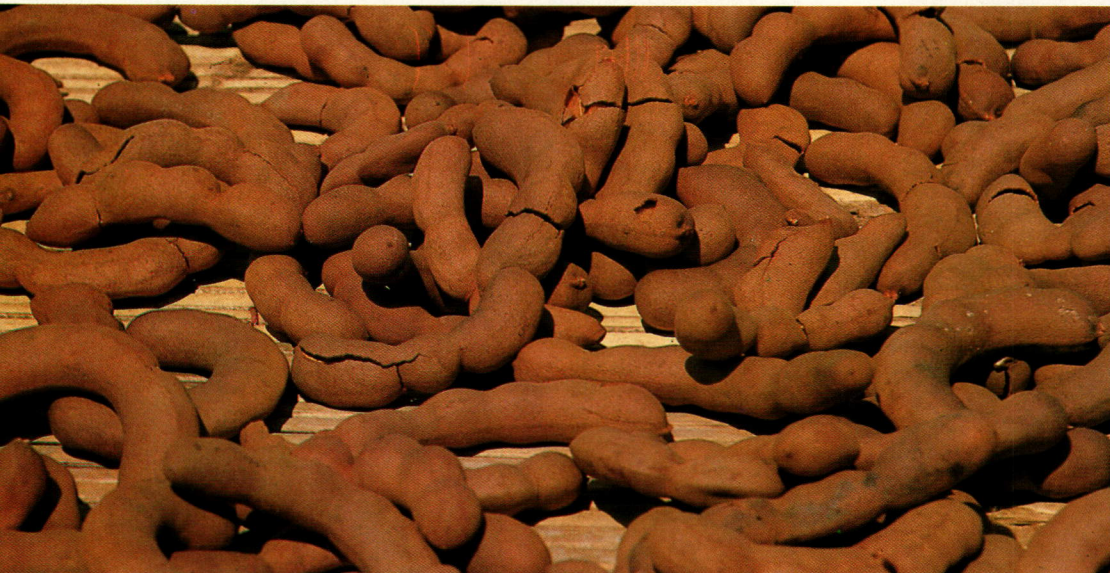
Thai name	— Som Tra (Som Cheng)
Common name	— Sweet Orange
Scientific name	— <i>Citrus sinensis</i> (L.) Osbeck
Growing zones	— Central
Fruiting Season	— August - September
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruits
Taste	— Sweet







- Thai name — Malako
 Common name — Papaya
 Scientific name — *Carica papaya* Linn
 Growing zone — Central
 Fruiting season — All year round
 Usage — 1. Ripe fruits are eaten as fresh fruits
 2. Green fruits are used as vegetable
 Taste — Pulp of riped fruit is sweet



Thai name	— Makhnam wan
Common name	— Sweet Tamarind
Scientific name	— <i>Tamarindus indica</i> Linn
Growing zones	— North, Northeast
Fruiting season	— January - February
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruits
Taste	— Sweet



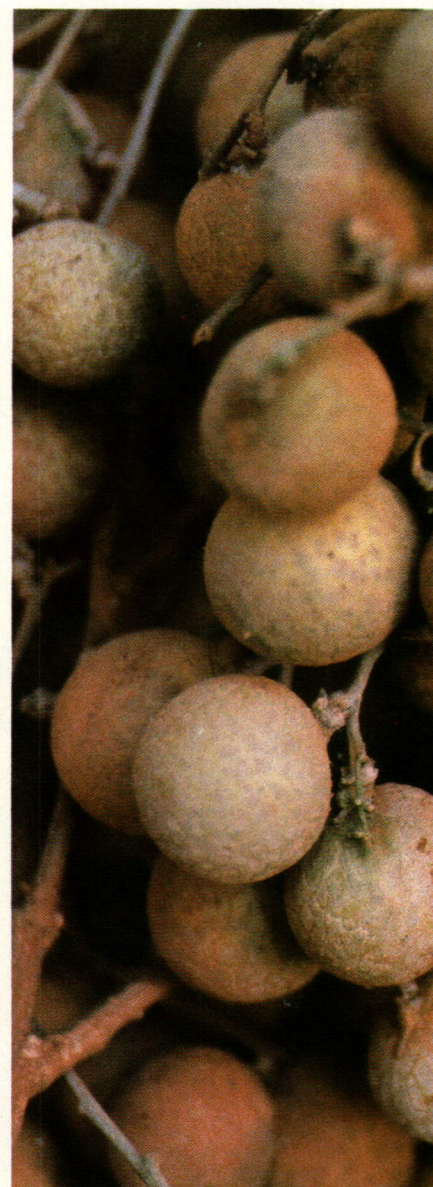


Thai name	— Noi na
Common name	— Sugar apple/Custard apple
Scientific name	— <i>Annona squamosa</i> Linn
Growing zone	— Northeast
Fruiting season	— July - November
Usage	— Pulp is eaten raw or can be mixed with ice cream as dessert
Taste	— Very sweet with pleasant odour



Thai name — Phutsa
Common name — Jujube
Scientific name — *Zizyphus jujube* Lam
Growing zones — Central, East
Usage — 1. Eaten as fruits
 2. Can be processed as
 dries, juice or paste
Taste — Insipid sweet





Thai name — Lam Yai
 Common name — Longan
 Scientific name — *Euphoria Longana* Lam
 Growing area — North
 Fruiting season — July
 Usage — 1. Eaten as fresh fruits
 2. Canning
 Taste — Very sweet







Thai name	— Thurian
Common name	— Durian
Scientific name	— <i>Durio Zibethinus</i> Linn
Growing areas	— East and South
Fruiting season	— May - October
Usage	— 1. Pulp is eaten as dessert 2. Can be processed as paste
Taste	— Pulp is sweet taste with pungent smell

Thai name — Sapparot
Common name — Pineapple
Scientific name — *Ananas Comosus*
Growing areas — Northeast, East, South
Fruiting Season — All year round
Usage — 1. Eaten as fresh fruits
2. Canning
3. Can be processed as
paste, jam.
Taste — Sweet







- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Thai name | — Farang |
| Common name | — Guava |
| Scientific name | — <i>Psidium guajava</i> Linn |
| Growing zones | — Central Plane |
| Fruiting season | — All year round |
| Usage | — 1. Eaten as green or riped fruits
— 2. Certain varieties can be made as juice |
| Taste | — Full mature fruits are slightly acid and crispy. Ripe fruits are soft with a strong smell |







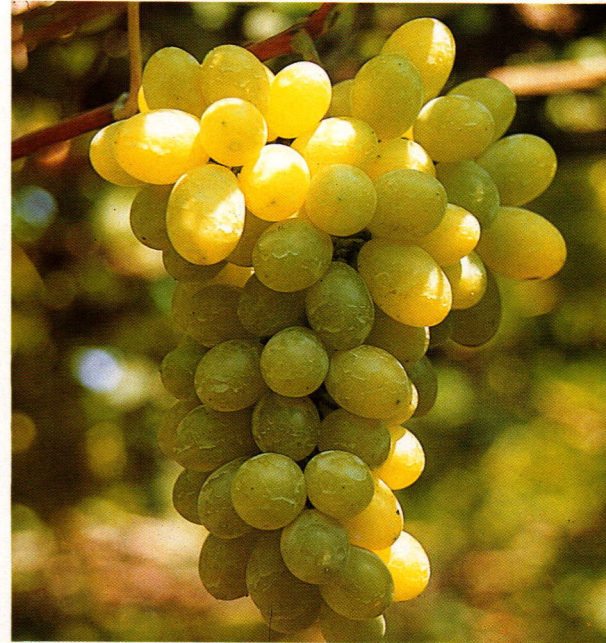
Thai name	— Chomphu
Common name	— Rose Apple
Scientific name	— <i>Eugenia fambose</i> Linn
Growing zones	— Central plane, East and South
Fruiting season	— June - September
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruits
Taste	— Slightly acid



Thai name	— Maprang
Common name	— Garsluria
Scientific name	— <i>Bauea Burmanica</i> Griff
Growing zones	— Lower North, Central, South
Fruiting season	— March - April
Edible part	— Pulp
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruit
Taste	— Sour or sweet







Thai name	— A-ngun
Common	— Grape
Scientific name	— <i>Vitis vinifera</i> Linn
Growing Zone	— Central
Fruiting season	— September - March
Usage	— 1. Table Fruits 2. Wine Production
Taste	— Sweet

Thai name	— Mangkhut
Common name	— Mangosteen
Scientific name	— <i>Garcinia mangostana</i>
Growing zone	— South
Fruiting season	— May - June
Usage	— Eaten as fresh fruit
Taste	— Sweet





SOME FRUITS AND THEIR USES



Delicately carved fruits make tasty desserts and snacks.

IN ALMOST every society of the world, fruits form a major part of man's diet. The types of fruits taken, however, and the manner in which they are eaten vary according to region, customs and climate.

Tropical fruits, of which there are at least fifty known varieties, find popularity all over the world. At least twenty different types can be found growing in Thailand's tropical climate. The best known, and perhaps the most important economically, are the banana, coconut, mango and pineapple.

Bananas, of which there are several varieties, can be found growing all year round in every part of the country. As a food, they are introduced to the Thai diet at a very early age and quite often form the first solid food introduced to a young baby. At the time that a baby is being



Iced coconut milk makes a delicious thirst quenching drink.

weaned, the banana is mashed with rice, and sometimes milk, and fed to the baby. From that time on, they become an important part of the Thai diet and Thai life. The fruit of the banana tree can be eaten raw, baked, mashed, made into sweet-meats and is sometimes eaten together with other fruits in the form of fruit salad. But the virtues of the banana do not stop there. The fruits can be turned into juices and the bananas, in bunches or clusters, are quite often used as offerings and in religious ceremonies. Apart from the fruit, the banana plant as a whole has a multitude of other uses for the Thai people. The fibre of the tree is used in making thread, the leaves are used as wrappings, sometimes as plates, and occasionally as umbrellas when a person finds himself caught in an unexpected storm. The flower of the plant is used in curries and can also be eaten raw as a salad vegetable while the trunk of the tree is commonly used as



a base to support decorations and adornments in religious and social ceremonies.

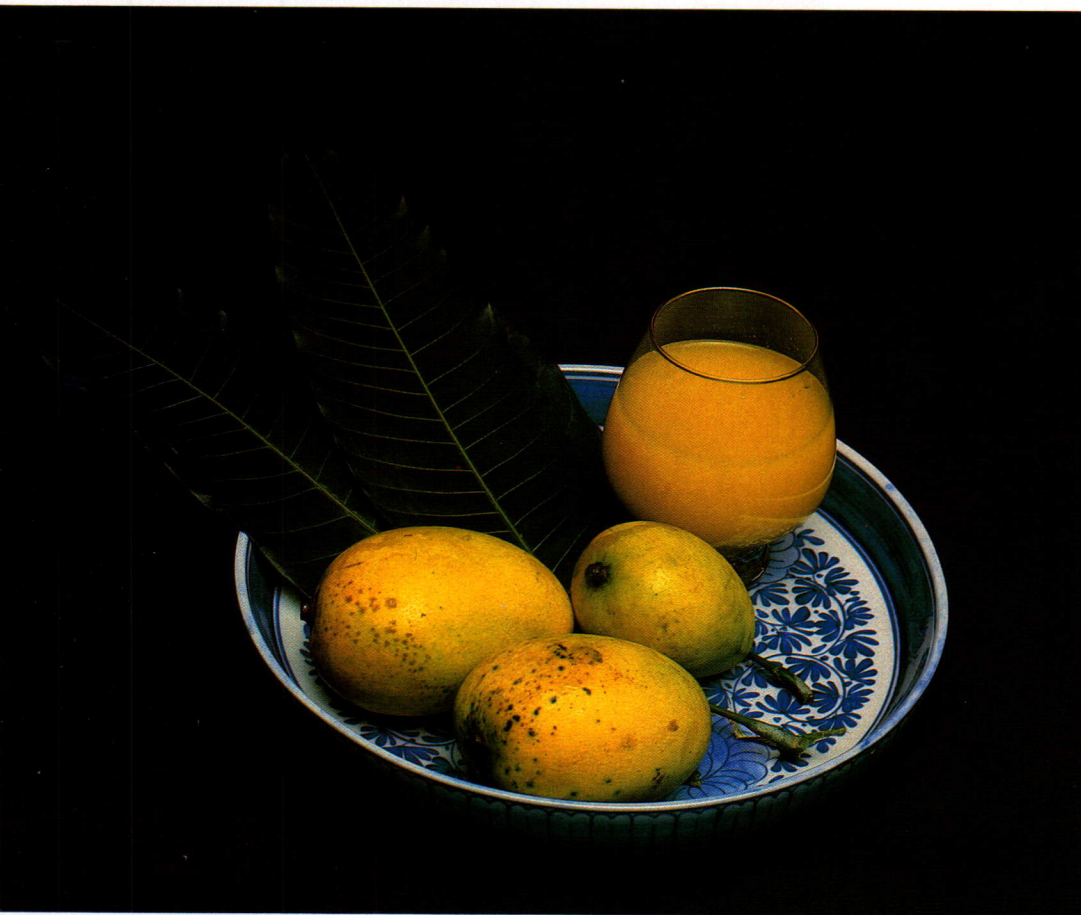
The coconut which is found in world markets is actually the seed which has been extracted from a larger, single-seeded woody fruit. It is the fibrous husk of the coconut fruit which provides the coir fibre extensively utilized for cordage, coarse matting and brushes. The milk of the fruit is considered by some to be a "pure form of liquid" and is used, particularly in Hindu worship, as an offering to deities and as a soul purifier. More commonly, the milk of the fruit is served chilled in the shell of a fresh coconut forming a refreshing drink popularly taken on a hot summer's day. Once the milk has been finished, the succulent, juicy flesh of the fruit is scraped from the shell and eaten as a delicious snack. The milk is also used in curries and sweetmeats while the flesh is sometimes shredded into iced syrup to make a refreshing dessert which can be enjoyed when the temperature rises.

The mango and the pineapple found in Thailand have been praised as being the sweetest to be found growing anywhere in the world. Apart from being taken ripe as sweet, juicy fruits, they can also be eaten in numerous other ways. The mango is popularly eaten raw (green) with a sweet, spicy dip while the pineapple is commonly cooked in curries and sweet and sour dishes.



(Upper) Pineapple juice.

(Lower) Jujube juice.



Mango juice.



Starfruit juice.

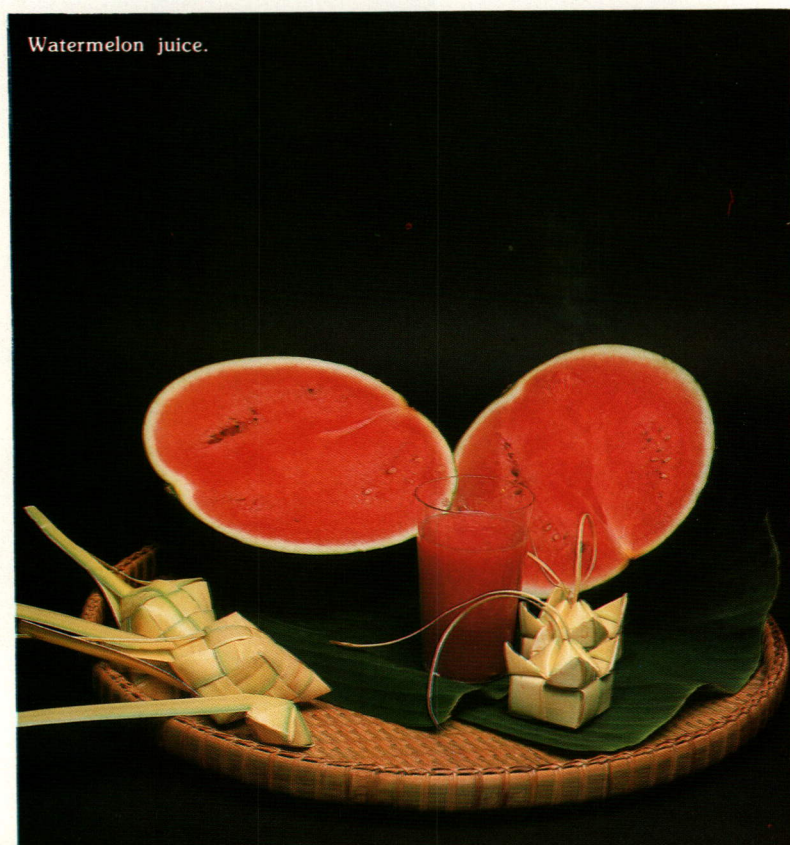
The jackfruit is another fruit commonly found growing in Thailand which has a variety of uses, both as a fruit and as a plant. The succulent, sweet smelling flesh of this knobby fruit is equally delicious when eaten alone as it is when served with ice-cream or with other fruits and sweetmeats in coconut milk as a fruit salad. The seeds of the fruit, when roasted, have a chestnut like taste, while the bark of the tree is used to produce a brown dye.

Lesser known Thai fruits include the guava, which is mostly eaten raw with a spiced, salty dip, breadfruit, stewed in syrup to form a dessert, tamarind, which makes a wonderful juice, papaya, mangosteen, litchi, delicious when served in syrup with ice, muskmelon, served in iced coconut milk, pomegranate, longan, pomelo and oranges.

Most fruits found in Thailand, including edible wild fruits which have many medicinal properties, can be enjoyed all year round. All fruits play an important role in Thai cuisine and their abundant supply enables them to be used in many delicious fruit dishes. Such dishes include pineapple curry, fruit appetizers, fruit snacks and sweetmeats, known as *khong wang* in Thai, fried fruits, fruit salads and fruit soups. The juice of certain fruits is also used as a base for making a variety of delicious fruit cocktails and fruit punches which come in many different flavours and colours. The highly popular and internationally famous fruit punch, *Mai Thai*, actually originated in Thailand. Fruit juices are also used to provide a host of flavourings for cakes, ices and ice-creams, many of which are finding popularity in icecream parlors around the world.



Tangerine juice.



Watermelon juice.



Glaced bael.



Guava juice.



Bael fruit juice.

FRUITS IN SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM is strictly observed in Thailand and although the majority of the population adhere to the Buddhist faith, other religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islamism can be found in practise throughout the country.

Apart from doctrinal differences, each religion has its own individual characteristics when it comes to practise and customs. One thing which most religions have in common, however, is the use of fruit and other foods in traditional ceremonies.

In Thailand, where the climate is tropical and the supply of fruit abundant, fruits are used in a variety of ways in religious and spiritually oriented social customs. Some fruits are held more important by one religion than another, while others find the same popularity in all religions and societies.

The coconut, for example, is one fruit which receives importance in most societies throughout Thailand.



Lay devotees presenting fruit offerings to monks.

Fruits of every type are used as offerings in religious ceremonies.



It is traditional amongst Thai Buddhists to use the milk of the coconut to wash the face of a deceased person prior to the cremation of the body. The milk of the fruit is also used in certain propitiation ceremonies and the fruit is quite often used as an accompaniment to offerings made to monks. These practises are merely social customs, however, and are not necessarily religious teachings. The custom could stem from Brahmin influence which is evident in some areas of Thai Buddhism.

According to some Hindu beliefs, the milk of the coconut is one of the most pure forms of liquid and as such it is quite often used in Hindu worship. Thai adherents of Hinduism make offerings of coconut milk to their deities, use it in their sweetmeats and drink it as a soul cleanser.

Although the Islamic religion teaches its followers to abstain from any form of ritualistic worship and to instill their faith in the prophet, Mohammed, it also teaches that Muslims should donate two and a half per cent of their property and wealth to the poor. In keeping with this teaching Muslim coconut growers in the southern part of Thailand give up two and a half per cent, or perhaps even more, of their coconut crop for the benefit of people less fortunate than themselves.

Most Christian ceremonies in Thailand follow the same pattern as those in Christian communities all over the world, particularly the "Harvest Festival", which is celebrated by some Christian communities in Thailand with a feast and by presenting fruits to churches and Christian organisations.

A festival similar to the "Harvest Festival" is also celebrated in Thailand amongst Thai Buddhists.

Buddhism teaches that it is wise to accumulate merit in order to help attain peace in this and future lives. Merit can be made in three different ways, namely, generosity, or giving, morality, practising the precepts, and mental development, through meditation and study.

To give something to someone is to show that you care for them and is also an expression of loving kindness and compassion. The act of giving also shows friendliness and good will to other people, be they friends, neighbours or strangers. Giving can also help those in need,

such as in times of disaster, as well as show our gratitude and respect to worthy people such as our parents, teachers, benefactors and monks who set moral and spiritual examples for society.

Bearing these teachings in mind, it has become customary amongst Thai Buddhists to offer the first fruits of the season to monks. Fruits are generally offered in lots and mangoes or durian usually form the principle fruits. At the time that the ceremony is to be performed, monks are invited to draw lots and the fruits are presented in accordance with the number appearing on the lot they have drawn. Sometimes donors draw on behalf of the monks.

Amongst the Chinese community in Thailand, it is traditional to use a certain type of orange called *Som Cheng* when performing traditional ceremonies, such as ancestral worship, or when making offerings to the deities. The word *Som* means orange in Thai while the word *Cheng* is Chinese for prosperity. It is believed that offering this particular type of orange will bring prosperity for the person making the offerings or for the person, or deceased soul, on whose behalf the offerings are being made.

Thai people also have a ceremony for paying homage to their ancestors. The ceremony, known as *Sat Thai*, is similar to the Christian "All Saints' and Souls' Day", and generally comes towards the end, or just after, the Buddhist Rains Retreat. At that time Thai people will remember their ancestors by making offerings, which include amongst other things, parcels of fruits, in the memory of their loved ones. It is also traditional at that time to make a type of sesame and peanut cake which is eaten with a certain variety of banana known as *Kluai Khai*.

Apart from the practises mentioned, fruits are also offered to monks, together with other alms food, throughout the entire year. They are also offered to worthy lay people and people considered worthy of such a presentation.

FRUITS IN THAI CUISINE

Preparing Fruits for the Dining Table

Fresh fruits are available in Thailand throughout the entire year. Certain varieties, such as orange, pineapple and water melon, are available all year round, while other more popular fruits

like mango, durian, rambutan, longan and litchi, are seasonal. Even some wild fruits, such as mangosteen and rose-apple, plus many others which are totally unknown in Western countries,



Bananas can be served in a variety of ways to make



Mango served with glutinous rice topped with sweetened coconut milk.

(Right) Sweet tangerines packed to meet market demands.

Fruits delicately carved by Thai chefs
make a popular dessert.

such as santol (sandoricum) and hibiscus (roselle), are known and loved by the Thais who can expertly prepare them for the dining table.

One major requirement of a good housewife, since ancient times, is skill in fruit preparation, an art handed down from generation to generation. The main objective is to facilitate consumption, while, at the same time, making the fruit appear more attractive and inviting on the table.

Artistic skill is required from the very beginning when the skin of the fruit must be peeled or broken. Thai fruits are generally sweet and juicy with a rather soft and delicate flesh. Peeling ripe fruits, such as mangoes, can thus become a predicament for the inexperienced, resulting in the whole thing turning out a mess, quite unpleasant to the eyes and thereby uneatable for the meticulous Thais.

In peeling ripe fruits, care must be taken from the very beginning. A bronze fruit-peeling knife with a thin blade has been specially designed so that the best results can be achieved. This is an indispensable item in every Thai household. It leaves no stains on the peeled fruit and, with practice, a high degree of dexterity can be achieved. The peeler can even identify with the end result, as in the case with all works of art. In fruit-peeling, the fine traces produced by the knife-blade indicate the level of expertise. Executed by truly experienced hands, the peeled fruits would appear like fine sculptures. For training purposes, the egg-shaped golden fruit called *Maprang*, from a tree of the sumac family, is normally used. The fruit has an extra fine skin and a soft delicate flesh. The fine traces left on the peeled fruits must be evenly and properly spaced.

Fruits with a hard, thick skin which is normally separated from the flesh would be cut neatly around so that they may be easily opened by the consumers. Such fruits include mango-steen, rambutan and longan.

Preparation does not stop there. Various techniques have been designed for removing the seeds from the fruits, depending on the forms and nature of the fruits. Fruits like mango are wholly carved out and cut up evenly. Small fruits like rambutan or longan are carefully carved with a tiny pointed knife. The fruits then remain fully intact, but unseeded, and in some cases put back into their peels. Fruits with soft but firm flesh, such as papaya and sapodilla, can be artistically

carved into various shapes and forms as far as one's imagination permits.

Fruits With Accessories and as Ingredients

It is completely unknown when the period of trial and error existed amongst Thai people in relation to food. Eating and cooking methods were already devised and fully developed in ancient times. From childhood Thai people learn from experience what particular foodstuffs go together well and in what way. Fruits are no exception.

Certain fruits, peeled and unseeded, are dressed with syrup to further accentuate their sweetness. Others, with a sweet and sour taste, such as roseapple, certain varieties of mango, or pomelo, are provided with a mixture of salt, white or coconut sugar and hot chillies, pounded together. Custard apples, meanwhile, are cleverly unseeded with a sharp, pointed knife, and dressed with coconut milk seasoned with salt. Sugar cane is peeled, cut into small bite-size









Santol ripening on trees.

pieces which are sometimes left attached in a chain, then put into a covered container with burning scent and served in a bowl with rose petals as decorative items.

The simplest and most delightful way of serving fruits as a dessert is by serving them as a dish known as *Loi Kaeo*, or "Cool Float." Fruits used are those with sweet and sour qualities such as santol and some varieties of orange. They are cut up into fine pieces and served in syrup with crushed ice and rose petals or jasmine flowers added to enhance the aroma. They provide the perfect sweet dish for a refreshing summer afternoon in the shade.

Fruits with a sour or bitter taste, such as santol, young mangoes, and a few others can be treated differently, somewhat like a Thai hot salad or *Yam*. Dishes prepared in this manner are called *Song Khruang* such as *Krathon Song*

Khruang, dressed santol. The dressing is made of finely ground dried prawns, roasted and crushed peanuts and grated and grilled coconut. This is mixed with palm sugar, stirred over a fire, seasoned with salt and chillies, then put over the fruits which are cut up or sliced.

Sour fruits preserved in salt water are also served with the mixture of salt, sugar and chillies. They are popular amongst young people and party goes everywhere throughout the Kingdom.

Stewed in syrup over a fire, many fruits can be turned into a wide range of sweet dishes. Such dishes are known by the name of the fruit with the addition of the word *chuam*, which describes the method of preparation.

There are also fruits preserved in a thick syrup, resulting in a thick, dry jam, called in Thai *Phonlamai Kuan*. They can be further made

into other sweetmeats as either the main ingredient or accessory. Some fruits are not consumed fresh, but are made straight into sweets using the *chuam* or *kuan* methods. Breadfruit is one prime example. Fruits of the bael tree are preserved, dried and glazed as *Chae-Im*. This method is even applied to such unusual foodstuffs as the peels of the pomeloes.

Fruits in a Thai Meal

Having fruits at the end of a meal or as supper is quite common though the fruit varieties differ according to localities and climate. However, having fruits as a main dish, or as major ingredients in a dish, is rather unusual. It can be said that, in Thailand, an extensive and comprehensive use of fruits has been found. And nowhere else in the world can one find fruits cooked over a fire in such a variety of ways, and in such sophisticated manners, as in Thailand.

Many seasonal fruits, such as durian, mango, longan and mangosteen are enjoyed to the full. In many households, the very young and very old members of the family eat them with cooked rice. They are relishing and good for the digestive system, particularly in hot weather when heavy eating could do more harm than good. The fruits are peeled and arranged beautifully to attract the eyes and whet one's appetite. Common all-year round fruits, such as water melon and orange, also serve the purpose well. In the case of water melon, a special side dish is prepared. It is made up of dried freshwater fish, fried and flavoured with chopped red onions and sugar.

Some fresh fruits such as young mango, pomelo and raw papaya in their original form make excellent ingredients for hot Thai salads known as *Yam*. In general, Thai salads are rather spicy and tend to be sour in taste. The name *Yam*, though translated as salad should, therefore, not be taken lightly, especially by those not familiar with Thai spicy food.

Many varieties of fruit serve well as ingredients for spicy soups such as *Tom Yam* and *Kaeng*. These include pineapple, young jackfruit and raw banana. Young jackfruit, steamed or boiled in coconut milk, is also ideal for *Nam Phrik* - spicy chilli sauce. So is raw banana which requires no cooking.

Pineapple is one of the most versatile fruits in the Thai household. It can be consumed

simply as a fresh fruit, made into juice, preserved as a light or thick jam to be further made into sweetmeats or used as a dressing or filling. It is also used as an ingredient in many other Thai dishes.

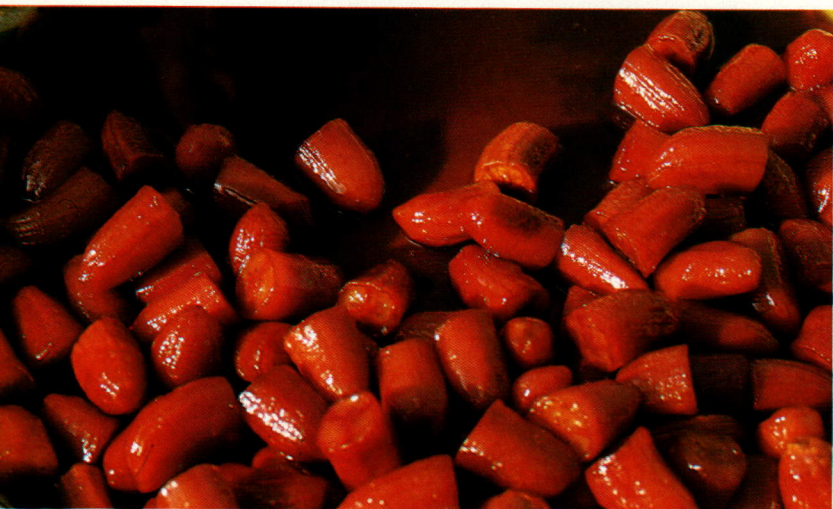
Finely chopped pineapple flesh is indispensable for a popular supper made up of round rice noodles, Thai style, ironically called *Khanom Chin*, or Chinese noodles. It is normally consumed with a specially made thick and spicy gravy known as *Nam Phrik* or *Nam Ya* and vegetables. A delightful option is to top the noodle with chopped pineapple, pounded dried prawn, shredded garlic and seasoned with fresh coconut milk, fish sauce and hot chillies. It is known as *Khanom Chin Sao Nam* and is a refreshing light meal on a hot day.

Another popular dish with pineapple as the main ingredient is a spicy soup called *Kaeng Khua Sapparot*. This soup is made up of commonly used spices such as lemon grass, citrus rind, garlingale, garlic, red onion, pounded and mixed with shrimp paste, coconut sugar and fish sauce, then put into thick coconut milk over the fire. Prawns and dried sea mussels are put into the mixture before some more coconut milk is poured into it to make up the soup. Chopped pineapple flesh is then added to the soup which is brought to the boil and seasoned with some sugar and fish sauce.

There are also some less spicy dishes which use pineapple as the main ingredient. One is simply called *Phat Sapparot* — fried pineapple, where coarsely chopped pineapple is fried in oil with prawns and other meat. Big chillies and onion plants are added and the mixture thickened with flour and seasoned with fish sauce, pepper and chillies. Another popular dish is *Sapparot Pet* — pineapple duckling, in which the duckling is made into chunky portions, without the bones, seasoned and deep fried, and topped with pineapple, chopped and cooked over the fire.

Bananas grow in abundance in every part of Thailand. There are about twenty known varieties of which about six provide the people with fruits that come in very handy as fresh fruits, partly processed snacks or cooked sweetmeats.

The most common and best known variety of banana in Thailand is called, in Thai, *Kluai Nam Wa*. This is a big, fat fruit covered with maroon coloured peels. It is found in all sorts



of Thai diets. As young green fruits, they are eaten raw with spicy sauce as a kind of vegetable, or used as ingredients in hot, spicy soups. As fully developed, but unripe fruits, they are sliced, either horizontally or vertically, dried in the sun, then fried and seasoned with a sprinkle of salt and plenty of sugar. This sweet is known as *Kluai Chap* and is ideal for snacks or appetizers.

When ripened, the fruits can be simply consumed or made into various types of sweetmeats. They can be grilled over the fire and soaked with syrup to produce *Kluai Ping* or pressed flat under a wooden block before being soaked to produce *Kluai Thap*. Boiled bananas, when sliced and topped with coconut flesh seasoned with salt and sugar make delightful sweetmeats. Boiled in syrup they become crimson and relishing as *Kluai Chuam*. Another popular sweetmeat is *Kluai Buat Chi*, where banana slices are boiled in coconut milk with salt and sugar added making a creamy soup of a greyish colour. They can be smoked using the peels in the place of wrappings. Either the commonly known *Kluai Nam Wa*, or another variety known in Thai as *Kluai Hak Muk*, with long chunky fruits in orange or reddish colours are ideal for smoking. The finished product, known as *Kluai Phao* appears as a burnt out banana with the blackened peel concealing a delicious golden well-cooked banana. The *Kluai Nam Wa* variety is also enjoyed as *Kluai Khaek* — Thai style banana fritters. The bananas are sliced and dipped into a mixture of coconut milk and wheat flour before being deep fried in vegetable oil. The crispy, crunchy snacks which result can be found being sold on street corners and in market places all over the country. Some vendors often add another form of product to their lists called, in Thai, *Khao Mao Thot* using a certain type of banana called *Kluai Khai*. In this case, the whole fruit is used. It is peeled, thoroughly covered with a mixture of young corn crusted and flavoured with sugar and coconut crumbs then deep fried in the same manner.

M Olive

The "Nam Wa" variety of banana is popularly used in making a variety of sweetmeats.

Boiled in syrup they become *Kluai Chuam*.

Smoked over an open fire they become *Kluai Phao*.

Excess ripe bananas are dried in the sun. After a few days, during which they are turned and taken good care of, the fruits turn a golden brown and render a very becoming taste. These, known as *Kluai Tak* can be further made into many other fancy dishes.

Another clever way of disposing of over-ripe bananas is to make a kind of steamed cake by mixing mashed bananas with rice flour flavoured with salt and sugar. This is called *Khanom Kluai* — banana cake.

Eating in Thailand, one can hardly avoid the intake of coconut, subtly put into various dishes in the form of coconut milk or as coconut flesh. It is as indispensable in a Thai kitchen as milk is in a European kitchen.

It has the same function as milk and is equally, if not more versatile. As milk and cream it is used in the preparation of main dishes, side dishes and sweetmeats. As curd it is made into pastries and sweets. As sliced or grated flesh, it can be used as the main ingredient in many dishes or as toppings and decor.

Coconut milk is essential in making Thai spicy soup, or *Kaeng Phet*, with a wide range of variations, depending on the ingredients, spices used, preparation and cooking. In fact there is only one kind of spicy soup called *Kaeng Pa* — Jungle Soup — which uses lard instead of coconut milk. This is because coconut milk is not obtainable in some localities.

Next to the Thai spicy soup is the hot soup which uses meat as the main ingredient. A few spices are used to subdue the odour and the seasoning is done accordingly. This type of soup is known as either *Tom Yam* or *Tom Kathi*. In the former the use of coconut milk is optional while in the latter its use is indispensable.

Coconut milk or cream is also used in numerous other dishes apart from soup. It is often used for boiling vegetables and the resulting delicious flavour is enhanced when they are eaten with *Nam Phrik*.

When it comes to sweetmeats, however, the coconut proves to be a more versatile and handy ingredient. Either as coconut flesh or coconut milk, fresh or cooked, it can be used as the main ingredient, as a component, as part of the mixture or for decorative purposes.

As coconut flesh, it is scraped out or grated in tiny, long strips and stirred in a thick syrup until crispy and then glazed. In this form it is known as *Maphrao Kaeo* — crispy coconut. Fanciful colours can be added. It is piled up into small, round heaps, dried and stored as a handy and lasting dessert.

Coconut strips basked in thick, brown syrup, meanwhile, serve as a component for many sweets and desserts, especially those using rice flour and palm or coconut sugar as the main ingredient.

Finely grated coconut, on the otherhand, is seasoned with salt and sugar and is used to give a finishing touch to doughs made of rice flour, with or without the fillings, and made in many different ways, known as *Khanom Kho*, *Khanom Tom Daeng Tom Khao*, *Thua Paep* and others. In the same manner, it is used to dress up some simple desserts like boiled bananas or shredded, grained, cooked and pounded.

The use of coconut milk in Thai sweets and desserts is vast and only a few sweet dishes can do without it. From candy to ice cream, coconut milk is indispensable as a mixture.

The Thai candy or toffee, traditionally brown or light brown in colour, is made up of coconut sugar and coconut milk with some other ingredients added. This delicious toffee holds its own amongst the fanciful candies and chewing gums that are appearing on the market these days.

Certain fruits and other materials boiled in coconut and sweetened with coconut sugar or cane sugar make up a favourite type of dessert. In the case of bananas, it is known as *Kluai Buat Chi*, while in other cases the name is *Kaeng Buat*. Pumpkin, taro and sweet potato are amongst the most frequently used ingredients.

With rice and wheat flour, coconut milk creates a whole range of sweetmeats, with vast variations in cooking methods and ingredients. One of the cleverest methods, resulting in the dish called *Khanom Plakrim Khai Tao* involves the boiling of kneaded rice flour in the shape of tiny long doughs in a mixture of coconut sugar and served with similar doughs boiled in sweetened coconut milk, making up two colours and different tastes that blend so well when eaten.



Different varieties of pickled and preserved fruits.

Sugar soaked mangoes.

Salted mangoes.

Pickled mangoes.

When no other materials are available, fresh eggs can be broken and dropped into boiling sweetened coconut milk and served as a sweet known as *Khai Wan*. Tiny round doughs can be boiled at the same time. This is called *Bua Loi* and is a speciality for the cool weather.

For centuries, Thai people have played around with fruits. The experiments are endless and new variations and recipes are always being invented.

Fruit Preserving in the Thai Home

The abundance and large variety of fruits available in all parts of the country bring forth the necessity, and hence the skill, to preserve fruits for taste as well as for economy.

The numerous edible fruits in Thailand can be divided into the sweet and the sour groups. These again are sub-divided into the watery and the dry types, with or without stones. Most fruits can be preserved in one way or another. Some can be preserved in many different ways. There are only a few types which cannot be preserved. These are fruits like water-melon, pomelo and mandarin.

Of all the Thai fruits, mango seems to be the most versatile in terms of preserving. The young sour fruits, apart from their savoury role in the kitchen, can be preserved in many different stages. Peeled or unpeeled and dipped in salted water for a few days until discoloured and crisp, it is called *Mamuang Dong* — pickled mango. Changed to a clear syrup of white sugar for a few more days, it becomes shiny and sweetened and is dubbed *Mamuang Chae Im* — the sugar soaked mango. Left to dry in the sun until brown and sparkling, it can be kept longer as *Mamuang Chae Im Haeng* — the dry sugar soaked mango. Sliced and left to dry before passing through the latter process it becomes *Mamuang Khem* — salted mango — which is also quite tasty and often, when chewed, helps to prevent sickness.

Other fruits with a firm texture and sour taste preserved in this manner are *Mayom* — star gooseberry, *Madan* — garcinia, and *Makham* — tamarind. In Thai language, the *Ma-* prefix is almost always attached to the name of a sour fruit. Some other fruits which are not quite so sour

can also be preserved as *Chae Im Haeng*. They are *Mafuang* — starfruit, *Makham Pom* — Indian gooseberry, *Makok* — hog plum, *Makhwit* — elephant apple and *Matum* — the fruit of the bael tree, which when sliced and preserved becomes delightful small ochre coloured wheels. The wax gourd, though considered a vegetable, can also be preserved in this manner. This is also the case with pomelo peels which have graced the dining table from ancient times in their delightful preserved form.

The ripe and sweet fruits involve a different range of activities in preserving. Mango again ranks first for its versatility. Over-ripe mangoes or surplus supplies are peeled, put over a fire in a deep pan and stirred vigorously until they turn into a thick jelly. This is spread over a clean banana leaf with the use of a flat, wooden spoon known in Thai as *Mai Phai* — a wooden paddle. The mango sheets of different shapes and sizes will be left to dry in the sun for a few days. They are tasty and keep very well for long after the mango season has passed. The same method can hardly be applied to other sweet fruits which are mostly made into a thick jam with a much sweeter taste. The end results range from a thick jam to a sticky paste and come in varying colours. Some fruits have become delicacies when preserved, for example, durian, the thorny fruit with a golden, creamy texture which is preserved and known as Durian Cake.

Preserving, in fact, has opened up a whole new world of delicacies for the food loving Thais and has provided the Thai housewives with an exciting path to a never-ending recipe. It is yet another reflection of the ingenuity of Thai housewives in making full and elaborate use of all available resources.



Pickled tamarind.

Pickled hog plum.

Pickled santol.

CONCLUSION

Sweet, juicy, delicious, succulent, exquisite, delectable, luscious — the list could go on and on, and although such words have often been used, they seem barely adequate when attempting to describe the host of mouth-watering fruits to be found in Thailand. Sweet or sour, stone fruits or pulp, soft-skinned, hard-skinned, wild, exotic fruits unknown in foreign lands, or the all time favourites such as tropical pineapples, mangoes, watermelon, bananas, papaya, strawberries — Thailand has them all. Few countries in the world

are fortunate enough to be able to enjoy such a large variety of fruits, but the climatic conditions in Thailand provide the perfect environment for growing some of the most delicious exotic fruits to be found anywhere in the world. Although some of them are seasonal and can only be grown in certain areas, the majority are perennial and can be found all over the country.

Thai cooks, experts in the culinary arts, have used their skills to devise a vast variety of



ways to enjoy the fruits available. Apart from being enjoyed as fresh fruits, they are also used as the main ingredients in a host of mouth-watering recipes for sweetmeats and desserts, as well as appetizing side-dishes and curries, cocktails and fruit drinks. Little of the fruit ever goes wasted. Peels are glacéd, seeds are stewed and what are normally regarded as "over-ripe" fruits, are baked, roasted, sun-dried or turned into delicious jams and fruit loafs.

The development of the canning and packing industries has now made it possible for people all over the world to share the taste of

these delicious fruits. Refreshing juices, such as pineapple, orange and mango have been canned for export while other fruits, such as litchi, rambutan and lamyai, can be served, whole or sliced, straight from the can to the dinner table. Highly efficient shipping and container services also deliver fruits fresh to ports all over the world.

Thailand's exotic fruits have long had an important place in Thai society. They have been mentioned in literature, depicted in the arts and complimented by visitors from all over the world. They are now finding their way to foreign lands for all to enjoy and are receiving the acclaim which is justifiably theirs.

When next in the supermarket or grocery store, look for the can marked "Product of Thailand". Buy it and try it — you won't be sorry you did.



Exotic fruits of many different varieties are becoming important export items.

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