



RECIPE for health

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featured food:

JACKFRUIT

By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Jackfruit is like “manna from a tree.” Very large manna, that is. A fully grown jackfruit or jack or jak is ginormous—indeed, the largest tree-borne fruit in the world. Native to India, jackfruit trees grow in tropical to subtropical climates bearing fruit on their limbs and trunks. A mature tree yields 100 to 150 jackfruits each year. One jackfruit can weigh up to 80 pounds.

Young (green) jackfruit is harvested before it fully ripens so the sugars are not developed. Green jackfruit is used in savory dishes. Sometimes referred to as “vegan pulled pork”, it’s considered a meat substitute because of its texture—stringy and firm—and its mild flavor that adapts well to any kind of spice. But don’t consider it a meat substitute for its protein content. Jackfruit is a fruit and like other fruit, it is not high in protein.

Ripe jackfruit is used in sweet dishes. As it ripens, it turns yellow and softens on the outside while developing a strong musky aroma reminiscent of overripe fruit. The pulp is soft in texture with a flavor described as sweet and tropical—a blend of fruity flavors depending on the variety.

A fresh jackfruit is more than a little daunting, not only for its size. The exterior is covered with blunt thorn-like projections. Cut into one and it oozes a thick substance called latex. Warning—it’s best to wear gloves and coat your knife with oil. Better yet, buy a shrink-wrapped pre-cut portion. Canned jackfruit is widely available either packed in water or brine (green) for use in savory dishes or in syrup (ripe) for sweet dishes. You may also find it dried or freeze-dried for snacking or frozen for use in cooking.

The popularity of jackfruit is soaring for the texture and versatility it brings to vegan cuisine. Try it with any traditional spice combinations such as taco seasoning, curry, and barbecue spice rubs. Add it to pizza, chili, nachos, and casseroles.

Barbecue Jackfruit Sandwich

By Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, Residential Dining Services

Serves 4-6

- 2-20 oz. cans young green jackfruit in water
- 2 T. vegetable oil
- 3 T. barbecue spice mix, packaged or homemade
- 1/2 c. + 2 T. barbecue sauce
- Sandwich buns

Chef Kurt’s Homemade Barbecue Spice Mix

Makes 1 cup

Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl. Store in a jar with a tight fitting lid.

- 1/4 c. (packed) light brown sugar
- 3 T. chili powder
- 1 T. paprika
- 1 T. kosher salt
- 1 T. dried oregano
- 2 t. onion salt
- 2 t. granulated garlic
- 1 t. dried thyme
- 1 t. ground black pepper
- 1 t. cayenne pepper
- 1 t. curry
- 1 t. dry mustard

Drain fruit from the cans. Remove the core and coarse chop the jackfruit, removing the seeds as you chop.

Heat oil over medium heat in a non-stick sauté pan. Add chopped jackfruit and barbecue spice rub; stir until jackfruit is evenly coated. Sauté for 3-4 minutes.

Add barbecue sauce and mix well; mash with a spatula or spoon until the jackfruit is torn into bite-size pieces and looks like pulled pork. Simmer over medium heat until bubbly hot. Remove from heat and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.

Scoop onto sandwich buns. Serve with pickles and cole slaw.

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