South Florida Tropicals: Mango

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Today, major mango producers include India, Mexico, and Brazil. Other important producers include Australia, Israel, and the United States. Florida is the major producer of mangos in this country.

The two major commercial varieties grown in Florida are “Tommy Atkins” and “Keitt.” Other important varieties include “Palmer,” “Van Dyke,” and “Kent.”

Availability
Florida mangos are available from late May to October depending upon the variety and season. The peak season is generally from mid-June to mid-August.

Selection
Choose mangos that are mature, firm, and free of many blemishes. Avoid soft or shriveled fruit which may indicate bruising or immaturity. The best temperature for ripening mangos is between 70°F and 75°F. Fruits generally take from 3 to 8 days to ripen. To speed ripening, place mangos in an enclosed bowl or paper bag.

Background
Mangos (Mangifera indica L.) have been cultivated in India for over 4,000 years. Gradually, mangos were distributed throughout the tropics of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Mangos were successfully introduced to Miami, Florida in 1863. The first mango variety commercially grown in Florida was the “Haden” mango.
**Storage**
Unripe mangos should not be stored at temperatures below 55°F, since these colder temperatures will cause chilling injury (uneven flesh ripening and off-flavors). Refrigerate only ripe (soft) mangos.

Ripe mangos may be refrigerated whole and unpeeled for 4 to 5 days. Peeled, sliced, and covered fruit can be stored for 3 or 4 days in the refrigerator.

**Uses**
No other fruit compares to the flavor of a ripe mango. The mango is very versatile, and can be used at any stage of maturity. Each variety is slightly different in flavor and other characteristics from the others. Green or immature fruit is excellent for cooking as a sauce. Ripe mangos can be enjoyed raw as a fresh fruit dessert, in salad, etc.

**Nutritive Value**
Mangos are very nutritious. They are an excellent source of pro vitamin A, are a good source of vitamin C (ascorbic acid), and they are low in fat. The vitamin content depends upon the variety and maturity of the fruit. 100 grams (approximately cup) contains:

- 65 calories
- 0.5 gram protein
- 0.3 gram fat
- 17 grams carbohydrate
- 28 mg. vitamin C
- 4,000 IU vitamin A precursors

Source: USDA NDB Number: 09176

**Food Safety During Preparation**
Following these steps will help reduce your risk of foodborne illness.

- Wash your hands with hot soapy water before and after:
  - handling fresh produce
  - handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood
  - using the bathroom
  - changing diapers
  - handling pets
  - Wash fresh mangos with cool tap water just before preparing or eating. **Don’t use soap or detergents.**
  - Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops often. Use hot soapy water and rinse well. **Sanitize** them after contact with fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

**Preservation**

**Freezing**
Very ripe, juicy mangos may be frozen in plastic bags or containers without sugar or syrup. Less ripe mangos should be frozen with sugar or sugar syrup.

Slice mango into bite-size pieces. Pack into moisture-vapor-proof containers. If using syrup, add a medium syrup (1 cup sugar to 1 cup water), leaving a 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, then freeze at 0°F.

**Drying**
Use ripened fruit. Wash, seed, and peel. Cut into 1/2-inch slices of uniform size. Spread the slices in a single layer on drying racks in a dehydrator. Mangos are dry when they feel firm, but are still leathery and show no pockets of moisture.

Store dried mangos in airtight containers in the refrigerator, or freezer (for longer storage).

**Yield**
One medium mango (4” by 3 1/2”) yields approximately 2 cups of prepared fruit.

**Using Mangos**
*Tropicales may vary in natural pectin, acid and sugar content from one season to another due to the variations of the climate.*

**Substitutions:** Green mango slices may be substituted for any recipe calling for tart apples. Likewise, medium ripe mangos may be used in recipes calling for peaches.
**Mango Sorbet**

2¼ cups chopped ripe mango  
½ cup unsweetened orange juice  
2 tablespoons honey  
Lime rind curls (optional)  
Grated lime rind (optional)

Remove peel and pit from mangos. Dice and measure 2 cups of mango, and place in an electric blender. Add orange juice and honey. Process until smooth. Pour the mixture into an 8-inch square pan. Cover and freeze until firm. To serve, spoon into individual dessert dishes. Garnish with lime curls and lime rind, if desired. Yield: 5 servings (approximately 85 calories per cup serving).

**Florida Fruit Cup**

1 cup pineapple chunks  
1 cup mango slices  
1 banana, sliced  
1 cup orange juice  
grated coconut and guava jelly for garnish  

Prepare fruit, mix with orange juice, and chill. When ready to serve, sprinkle with coconut, and garnish with guava jelly. Makes six ½ cup servings.

**Green Mango Sauce**

6 cups green mangos, peeled and sliced  
1 cup water  
up to 1½ cups sugar

Steam or cook green mangos in water until they are tender. The green mango is very acidic and gives the best product. Many varieties cook quickly to a mush. Add sugar according to acidity and family preferences, and cook 5 minutes longer. Substitute for applesauce as a dessert, in breads or cakes, sherbets, etc.

To freeze: Pack sauce in freezer containers leaving 1/2 inch headspace and freeze at 0°F.

**Green Mango Banana Bread**

4 eggs, slightly beaten  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup green mango sauce  
1 cup diced banana  
3½ cups all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 cup nuts, raisins, or currants (optional)

Mix eggs, green mango sauce and bananas together in a large bowl on low speed of electric mixer. In a separate bowl, combine dry ingredients and blend into first mixture. Pour into 4 medium loaf pans that have been greased and floured. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour.

**Chicken Salad with Mango**

2 cups chopped, cooked chicken  
2 cups chopped, ripe mango  
1 large tomato, chopped  
1 medium-size green pepper, chopped  
2 green onions, chopped  
½ cup low-fat plain yogurt  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 teaspoon sugar  
lettuce or spinach leaves

Combine chicken, mango, tomato, green pepper, and onion in a large bowl. Blend vinegar, lemon juice and sugar into the yogurt. Fold into fruit/chicken mixture. Chill 2 hours. Yields approximately 4 servings.