South Florida Tropicals: Black Sapote

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Background
The smooth-textured black sapote (Diospyros dignya) originates from Central America and Mexico. The black sapote fruit resembles a large, round green tomato on the outside and varies in size from two to five inches in diameter (Figure 1). The black sapote’s flesh is rich and custard-like, with a sweet, mild flavor. Some people find the taste to be like chocolate, which gave the sapote its nickname, the chocolate pudding tree.

Availability
Normally available during the winter months, December to April.

Selection
Choose firm, bruise-free sapotes with olive-green skin. A sapote can feel hard one day, and be soft and ready to use the next; therefore it should be carefully watched. When ripe, the sapote skin is dull olive green, which tends to break in small grainy pieces. In the hand, properly ripe fruit feels like a soft marshmallow. The flesh color of unripe fruit is mustard yellow, while ripe fruit has black, soft flesh.

Storage
Allow sapotes to ripen at room temperature, uncovered and out of direct sun; turn occasionally until they are ripe and yield to gentle pressure. Refrigerate unwashed, ripe sapotes in a plastic or paper bag. They will keep 3 to 5 days. For longer storage, pulp should be frozen.

Nutritive Value
Sapotes contain a fair amount of vitamin A, are a good source of vitamin C, have a relatively high amount of...
potassium, and small amounts of other vitamins and minerals.

100 grams (approximately 1/3 cup) contains:

- 62% water
- 130 calories
- 2 grams protein
- less than 1 gram fat
- 35 grams carbohydrate
- 345 mg. potassium
- 20 mg. vitamin C
- 400 IU vitamin A

**Basic Preparation**

Cut sapote into 4 to 6 wedges cutting from blossom end towards stem. With spoon, gently scoop out pulp, discarding seeds. The pulp tends to break up easily. Pulp can be used immediately or frozen. For cooking, black sapote pulp is usually pureed with a little orange zest and juice or vanilla which becomes the basic ingredient for other preparations such as mousse.

**Food Safety During Preparation**

- 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 fruits and vegetables with cool tap water just before preparing or eating. **Don't use soap or detergents.**
  - Cut away bruised or damaged areas before preparing or eating.
  - 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 (See Table 1).
  - Don't cross contaminate. Use clean cutting boards and utensils for fresh produce.
  - If you can, use a separate cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
  - Do not consume ice that has come in contact with fresh produce or other raw products.

- Use a cooler with ice or ice gel packs when you take perishable foods outdoors. This includes cut fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Following these steps will help reduce your risk of foodborne illness from fresh produce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Sanitize</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mix one teaspoon of unscented chlorine bleach in one quart of water</td>
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<td>Pour the mixture onto the surface and let sit at least one minute</td>
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<td>Rinse well with hot running water</td>
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**Freezing**

Pulp keeps well frozen. Pack pulp into moisture-vapor proof sealed containers, leaving a ½ inch headspace. Freeze at 0 degrees.

**Using Black Sapote**

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

**Chocolate Sapote Mousse**

1 pkg. sugarfree chocolate instant pudding mix (4 serving size)

1 black sapote (see Basic Preparation)

1 cup low-fat whipped topping

2 tablespoons instant coffee


**Dulce de Sapote Negro**

The name of this dish sounds better in Spanish (pronounced dul-seh deh sapoteh nay-gro) than its English translation, sweet of black sapote.

3 to 4 ripe black sapotes (sapotes must be very soft; an unripe sapote is inedible)

¼ to ½ cup light honey, to taste

1 teaspoon grated orange rind
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2 cups orange juice
2 tablespoons finely shredded orange rind

Remove stems from sapotes. Pull off green skin with your fingers. You now have a dark brown, thick pulp. Inside are hidden almond-shaped seeds. Remove these with your fingers. In food processor, combine sapote pulp, honey, orange rind, and orange juice. Pulse until mixed well. Chill. Mixture is bright, shiny black-brown. Serve in crystal dessert cup or dish. Sprinkle a few fine shreds of orange rind on each serving. Makes 4 to 6 servings. Dulce De Sapote Negro can also be frozen as a sherbet.

**Refreshington Sapote Fruit Drink**
Mixture for Dulce de Sapote Negro

orange juice, water, and orange slices

To the mixture for dulce de sapote negro, add enough orange juice and water (to taste) to bring to beverage consistency. Chill thoroughly. Serve on ice in chilled tall glasses. Garnish with an orange slice on the rim of each glass. Yields 1½ to 2 quarts.

**Honey Black Sapote Cake**

3 large sapotes (see Basic Preparation)

½ cup margarine
1 cup honey
3 eggs, separated
1½ cups sifted whole wheat flour
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon baking soda
1/3 cup powdered milk
Low-fat whipped topping (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 8x12 inch baking pan. Cream margarine and honey and gradually add egg yolks and sapote. Sift and then add dry ingredients a little at a time. In a second bowl, beat egg whites until stiff. Fold in egg whites to sapote mixture. Pour into baking pan and bake for 35 to 45 minutes. Test cake with a toothpick; baking time will vary according to the amount of sapote used. Cake is done when toothpick inserted in center of cake is clean, and when cake springs back when lightly touched with finger. Serve with a dollop of low-fat whipped topping if desired.

**Black Sapote Mousse**

1 cup black sapote pulp (see Basic Preparation)
3 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 teaspoon almond flavoring
2 cups low-fat whipped topping

Mix sapote pulp, sugar, and flavoring together. Fold in the whipped topping. Serve at once or chill in refrigerator. Do not freeze. Makes 4–6 servings.