



NATURE'S TONIC

JACK POT

Bursting with flavour and a variety of benefits, the jackfruit is a treasure waiting to be discovered

BY RAMA AHUJA



The largest tree fruit in the world – they grow up to 45 kilograms each – the jackfruit finds its origins in the rainforests of the Western Ghats in India. The last thing you'd ever want is a heavy jackfruit falling on your head; thankfully, the delicious fruit grows mostly on tree trunks or tree forks! Originally called *chakka pazham* in South India, the fruit went on to be named *jaca* by the Portuguese, which eventually evolved into its present-day name, jackfruit. The exotic fruit is a rich source of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, carbohydrates, electrolytes, fibre, fat and protein. While it does contain calories, it has no cholesterol or saturated fats, giving you yet another guilt-free reason to gorge on this tropical fruit. Ironically, the jackfruit is a classic example of a food that is prized in some areas of the world and allowed to go to waste in others. It is for this reason that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has listed it as a NUS (neglected and underutilised) food.

MULTI-PURPOSE FRUIT

The jackfruit can be dried, roasted and added to soups, and used in chips, jams, juices and ice creams. Not many know this, but even the tree itself is valued for its high-quality and rot-resistant timber, which is extensively used to create furniture and musical instruments. Even its seeds can be boiled, roasted and ground into a multi-purpose flour. Prakash Lopes, Executive Sous Chef, Sofitel Mumbai BKC, elaborates, "The fruit has many nutritional qualities and can be cooked in its ripe as well as unripe form. When ripe, the fruit is naturally sweet, making it a perfect ingredient for desserts. Unripe jackfruit, on the other hand,

has a distinct flavour that makes it ideal for curries." Speaking on the fruit's tender flesh, which shreds easily with a fork or by hand, Dane Fernandes, Executive Sous Chef, The St. Regis Mumbai, says, "If you try to pull a fast one on your friend who loves meat by putting some jackfruit on a bun, there's a good chance he'll be fooled. He will think it's the best pulled pork he's ever tasted." It is for this reason that the jackfruit is considered an excellent substitute for meat. Anshuman Bali, Executive Chef, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, says, "The fruit does contain calories, but no cholesterol or saturated fats. It is composed of 74 per cent water, 23 per cent carbohydrates, two per cent protein and one per cent fat. In a 100-gram portion of jackfruit, there are only 95 calories, which come hand-in-hand with a healthy dose of Vitamin B6."

HEALTHY DOSE

The jackfruit is rich in vitamins A, C and B6, as well as in magnesium and fibre. Roshani Gadge, Diabetologist Consultant, Gadge Diabetes Centre, explains, "The jackfruit is an ideal energy booster because it is loaded with carbohydrates and calories. Because it is rich in minerals that mimic the actions of insulin, it is the go-to food for those who suffer from insulin resistance, PCOD, infertility, and the like."

In fact, it is one of the rare fruits that is rich in the B-complex group of vitamins and contains outstanding amounts of Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine), niacin, riboflavin and folic acid. Munmun Ganerwal, Nutritionist, Fitness Consultant and Founder, Yuktahaar, explains, "The jackfruit helps improve digestion. Rich in antioxidants, phytonutrients and flavonoids, it helps fight free radical damage, which makes it a potent anti-carcinogenic food." 🌿



TREATS WRINKLES

Soak a jackfruit seed in cold milk for two hours.

Grind it well and then apply the paste on your wrinkles.

Wash off with cold water after half an hour.



CURES BLEMISHES

Sun dry some jackfruit seeds and then grind them to a powder.

Mix in a little honey to create a paste.

Apply it on scars and let it dry. Rinse off with warm water.



REMOVES TAN

Mix 2 tablespoonsful each of lemon juice and jackfruit pulp.

Apply the paste on tanned areas.

Let it sit for some time and then wash off with cold water.



NATURE'S TONIC

VIETNAMESE RIPE JACKFRUIT & SEAFOOD SALAD

- 150gms coarsely cut ripe jackfruit
- 75gms cleaned and de-veined shrimp
- 30gms cleaned calamari rings
- 4–5 green-lip mussels
- 2 medium shallots, minced
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 3 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 a fresh lime
- Vietnamese fish sauce dip (*nuoc cham*), to taste
- crispy fried shallots
- crushed peanuts
- 1/4 cup of cilantro, mint or herb of choice
- Rinse the jackfruit with cold water and squeeze out the excess water.
- In a pan, heat a tablespoonful of oil and sear the shrimp on each side for about a minute or until cooked.



- Remove from the pan and set aside.
- In the same pan, add 2 tablespoons of oil and the shallots and garlic. Sauté for about 30 seconds or until the shallots and garlic become fragrant, but not brown. Add the calamari and mussels, sauté for another 45 seconds. Then, add the fish sauce, sugar and salt.
- Remove the pan from the heat, and toss in the shrimp and black pepper.
- Place the shrimp and seafood mixture in a bowl and toss with the jackfruit, Vietnamese coriander and cilantro. Mix well to combine all the ingredients.

- Squeeze fresh lime juice over the salad, sprinkle the fried crispy shallots and drizzle with the Vietnamese fish sauce dip to taste.
- Assemble sections of black sesame seed rice crackers or prawn crackers on a plate and top with the jackfruit salad.
- Garnish with the peanuts and herbs.

Anshuman Bali
Executive Chef
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar



KATHAL KE GALAWTI KEBAB

- 500gms raw jackfruit
- 500gms yam
- 100ml oil
- 100gms soaked bengal gram (*chana dal*)
- An inch-long piece of ginger, chopped
- 6 green chillies
- 15 cloves of garlic
- 15gms yellow chilli powder
- Salt to taste
- 5gms turmeric powder
- 250gms ghee, for frying
- A pinch of garam masala
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 5 cloves
- 3 black cardamoms
- 10 black peppercorns
- An inch-long stick of cinnamon
- 2 tsps fennel seeds (*saunf*)
- 2 green cardamoms
- 50gms chopped fresh coriander
- Use an oiled knife to remove the skin from the jackfruit and yam. Cut them into half-inch-sized cubes. Cook the jackfruit and yam in sufficient water with turmeric powder and salt,

- until tender. Add the *chana dal* and cook until tender.
- Drain the excess water, if any, and grind the jackfruit, yam and *chana dal* with the ginger, green chillies and garlic (coarse paste).
- Dry roast the coriander seeds, cloves, black cardamoms, black peppercorns, cinnamon and fennel seeds. Cool and grind to a coarse powder.
- In a bowl, mix the jackfruit and yam mixture, ground powder, coriander leaves and salt, and mix well. Divide the mixture into equal portions. Shape them into balls and flatten them lightly.
- Heat a little ghee in a non-stick pan on medium heat and shallow fry the kebabs, a few at a time, until golden brown on both sides.
- Serve hot with green chutney.

Prakash Lopes
Executive Sous Chef
Sofitel Mumbai, BKC

JACKFRUIT CURRY

FOR THE CURRY

- 30ml mustard oil
- 100gms ginger-garlic paste
- 10gms grated carrot
- 10gms onion
- 10gms finely chopped celery
- 25gms cumin powder
- 25gms chili powder
- 25gms coriander powder
- 25gms red chili whole
- 50ml pineapple juice
- 25gms salt

FOR THE JACKFRUIT

- 200gms peeled, separated and crisp-fried jackfruit
- 25gms onion
- 25gms garlic
- 25gms clove powder
- 25gms *elaichi* powder
- 25gms cinnamon powder
- 25gms *garam masala*
- 25gms *haldi*
- 25gms coriander fresh
- 25gms dry coconut
- 50gms tomato puree
- 20ml vinegar
- 50ml coconut milk
- 100gms blanched snake beans,
- Toasted coconut and garlic *naan* to serve

- For the curry, temper the onion, garlic and ginger in mustard oil until soft (about 10 minutes).

- Add the coriander, cumin and chili and temper for 10 more minutes.
- Add the pineapple juice and simmer for 30 minutes. Cool and blend.
- Temper the onion and garlic in oil and cook until soft (about 10 minutes).
- Add the clove, *elaichi*, cinnamon, *garam masala* and *haldi* and temper for another minute, until fragrant.
- Add the curry, the tomato puree, a dash of vinegar and the coconut milk.
- Cook for 20 minutes and add the fried jackfruit.
- Finish with the coconut powder and snake beans, and garnish with the toasted coconut.

Sarah Todd
Co-Partner and Chef
The Wine Rack, Mumbai
and Antares, Goa



JACKFRUIT & AVOCADO TACOS

- 40gms young jackfruit
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp chipotle pepper powder
- 1/2 tsp ancho chili powder
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1 1/4 cup of water
- 1 tbsp barbeque sauce
- 8 cloves of garlic
- 1 tbsp barbeque sauce
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 an avocado slice
- Fried tortillas tacos
- 2 tsps chilly aioli

- Shred the jackfruit with your hands and keep aside.
- Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and a pinch of salt and cook until translucent. Stir occasionally.
- Mix the chipotle powdered peppers, barbeque sauce, garlic cloves, ancho chili, black pepper, cumin, coriander and oregano with 1/4 a cup of water until smooth.
- Add the blended sauce to the onions and cook until it thickens and smells roasted.
- Add the shredded jackfruit, then cover and cook for 5 minutes. Taste and adjust the salt, heat and sweet.
- Prep the toppings.
- Fill a fried taco with the jackfruit mixture and sliced avocado, and top it with the chilly aioli.

Dane Fernandes
Executive Sous Chef
The St. Regis Mumbai

