



Imli (Tamarind)



Hindi Name: Imli

Botanical Name: *Tamarindus indica* L

Parts Used

Most parts – The tamarind is very useful. The seeds, fruit, leaves, flowers and bark are all used medicinally as well as for other uses.

Origin:

The Tamarind, scientific name *Tamarin-dus indica* is the only species of the genus *Tamarindus* in the family *Fabaceae*. It is a tropical tree, native to eastern Africa, including parts of the Madagascar dry deciduous forests. It grows wild throughout the Sudan but has now been introduced into most of tropical Asia as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. The tree can grow up to 20m in height, and stays evergreen in regions without a dry season. Tamarind timber consists of hard, dark red heartwood and softer, yellowish sapwood. The leaves consist of 10-40 leaflets. The flowers are produced in racemes. The fruit is a brown pod-like legume, which contains a soft pulp and many hard-coated seeds. The seeds can be scarified to enhance germination. The fruit pulp is edible and popular. It is used as a spice in both Asian and Latin American cuisines, and is also an important ingredient in Worcestershire sauce.

Description:

Tamarind (Imli) fruit is used for its tart sour taste. It especially used in South Indian cuisine in dishes such as Sambhar, Rasam, etc. Nowadays, it is common to find Tamarind (Imli) fruit pulp in the Indian grocery stores. You may substitute Tamarind (Imli) with lime if unavailable, but expect minor change in taste.

Plant Description

Tamarind is the sour fruit pod of a tall, semi-evergreen tree which grows widely in the tropics and particularly in India. Tamarind trees reach a height of 30 m and are topped with a crown of feathery foliage. Their grey bark clad trunks can grow up to 2 m in diameter.

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Leaves - long and feathery. Each leaf is equally divided into many smaller, finely-cut leaflets.

Flowers - yellow and streaked with pink. They are shaped like small sweet peas and smell sweet. They dangle in small clusters from the ends of leafy twigs during March to May in India.

Fruits - brown, fleshy pods that are fibrous, thick and sticky. They are sausage shaped and covered in faint fuzz, like a kiwi fruit. Inside they contain a sharp-tasting pulp and several flat shiny brown seeds. They are an important food used to provide a sour flavouring for drinks, sauces, curries, preserves and chutney. In India the pods are ripe for harvesting from April to June.

Imli (Tamarind) in Other Languages

| | |
|----------|--------------|
| English | Tamarind |
| Hindi | imli |
| Gujarati | amli |
| Marathi | chinch |
| Telugu | chintachettu |
| Tamil | puli |
| Kannada | hunase |



Culinary uses

The taste of tamarind is very sour especially its pulp. The ripe fruit is a little less bitter, thus when sweetened can be used in a very well known sweet drink, drank by the Egyptians from a long time ago.

The pulp of the fruit is used as a spice both in Asian as well as in Latin American cuisine, and is also an important ingredient to Worcestershire sauce and HP sauce. The pulp of a young fruit is very sour, and hence suitable for main dishes. Tamarind pulp concentrate is popular as a flavoring in east Indian and middle eastern cuisine. It's used to season full flavored foods such as chutney, curry dishes and pickled fish.

Whereas in a ripened fruit, Tamarind is also used to make a sweet syrup flavoring for soft drinks and can be used in desserts, or as a snack.

Tamarinds in Indian cookery is an important ingredient in curries and chutneys, and makes a delicious sauce for duck, geese and water fowl, and in Western India is used for pickling fish, Tamarind fish being considered a great delicacy.

Varieties of Tamarind

There are several varieties of tamarind. Some yield fruits that are very sweet, without the slightest trace of sour. These sweet varieties command a high price at the market and are sold in their ripened pods to be eaten fresh as fruits. The province of Petchaboon in northeastern Thailand is known for its sweet tamarind (makahm wahn). Each year, when the fruit comes into season during the dry months, a Sweet Tamarind Fair is held with lots of festivities and lots of delicious tamarind to sample and take home. During this time of year, bags of the plump brown pods are peddled around by street hawkers as well as piled among colorful fruits at fruit stands across the country. The prized good-eating varieties even find their way into prepackaged gift baskets sold in modern Bangkok supermarkets, alongside imported fruits, canned goods and chocolates.

More common varieties produce tart fruits that vary from sweet-and-sour to mouth-puckering sour. The less sour ones – removed from their brittle pods and coated with a mixture of salt, sugar and crushed chillies – are a delight to nibble. They wake up the mouth, get the juices flowing and temporarily quench thirst. Others are cooked in syrup with their seeds strained out and made into candied tamarind. They are great for the digestive tract and have a mild, natural laxative effect. Additionally, tamarind is believed to possess blood purifying properties.

Nutritional Values of Tamarind Tamarind Pulp

| Parameters | Value per 100g |
|---------------|----------------|
| Moisture | 20.900 gm |
| Protein | 3.100 gm |
| Fat | 0.100 gm |
| Minerals | 2.900 gm |
| Fibre | 5.600 gm |
| Carbohydrates | 67.400 gm |
| Energy | 283.000 K cal |
| Calcium | 170.000 mg |
| Phosphorus | 110.000 mg |
| Iron | 17.000 mg |

Vitamins

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| Carotene | 60.000 µg |
| Riboflavin | 0.070 mg |
| Niacin | 0.700 mg |
| Vitamin C | 3.000 mg |

Minerals & Trace Elements

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Magnesium | 41.000 mg |
| Copper | 0.200 mg |
| Manganese | 0.550 mg |
| Chromium | 0.056 mg |



Health Benefits of Tamarind

1. Tamarind juice is a mild laxative.
2. Tamarind is used to treat bile disorders
3. Tamarind lowers cholesterol
4. Tamarind promotes a healthy heart
5. The pulp, leaves and flowers, in various combinations, are applied on painful and swollen joints.
6. Tamarind is use as a gargle for sore throats, and as a drink to bring relief from sunstroke.
7. The heated juice is used to cure conjunctivitis. Eye drops made from tamarind seeds may be a treatment for dry eye syndrome.
8. Tamarind seed polysaccharide is adhesive, enabling it to stick to the surface of the eye longer than other eye preparations.
9. Tamarind is used as a diuretic remedy for bilious disorders, jaundice and catarrh.
10. Tamarind is a good source of antioxidants that fight against cancer.
11. Tamarind reduces fevers and provides protection against colds. Make an infusion by taking one ounce of pulp, pour one quart of boiling water over this and allow to steep for one hour. Strain and drink tepid with little honey to sweeten. This will bring down temperature by several degrees.
12. Tamarind helps the body digest food
14. Tamarind applied to the skin to heal inflammation
14. The red outer covering of the seed is an effective remedy against diarrhea and dysentery.
15. Juice extracted from the flowers is given internally for bleeding piles.

Medicinal use

Medicinal uses of Tamarind are many and it is used extensively in the Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda. Tamarind preparations are universally recognized as refrigerants in fevers and as laxatives and carminatives. Alone, or in combination with lime juice, honey, milk, dates, spices or camphor, the pulp is considered effective as a digestive, even for elephants, and as a remedy for biliousness and bile disorders, and as an antiscorbutic. In native practice, the pulp is applied on inflammations, is used in a gargle for sore throat and, mixed with salt, as a liniment for rheumatism. It is, further, administered to alleviate sunstroke, Datura poisoning, and alcoholic intoxication.

History:

The tamarind originated many centuries ago in the Old World tropics spreading to other regions warm enough to continue its growth. Today tamarind is very popular in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the United States, it is commonly known as an important ingredient in Worcestershire sauce.

Dosage:

Adults (18 years and older):

There is no proven safe or effective dose of tamarind. However, 10 grams daily for up to three weeks has been used to delay the progression of fluorosis by enhancing excretion of fluoride. As a laxative, 10-50 grams of tamarind paste as fermented fruit cubes has been used.

Children

(younger than 18 years):

There is no proven safe or effective dose of tamarind in children. However, 10 grams daily for up to three weeks has been used to delay the progression of fluorosis by enhancing excretion of fluoride.

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