



(how easy is that?)

Jicama [HEE-kah-mah] is often referred to as the *Mexican potato*. This large, bulbous root vegetable has a thin brown skin and white crunchy flesh. Its sweet, nutty flavor is good both raw and cooked. Jicama must be peeled before using. When cooked, jicama retains its crisp, water chestnut-type texture.

Facts

Jicama can weigh up to 50 pounds.

Other common names for the jicama include sengkwang, "yacon," "yam bean," Mexican turnip. In the Philippines, it is referred to as singkamas.

The jicama plant grows as a vine that can reach a height of 4-5 m given suitable support. Its root can attain lengths of up to 2 m and weigh up to 20 kg. The root's exterior is yellow and papery, while its inside is creamy white with a crisp texture that resembles that of a raw potato or pear. The flavor is sweet and starchy. It is usually eaten raw, sometimes with salt, lemon juice, and powdered chile. It is also cooked in soups and stir-fried dishes. Notable raw jicama dishes include popiah and salads such as yusheng and rojak.

In contrast to the root, the remainder of the jicama plant is very poisonous; the seeds contain the toxin rotenone, which is used to poison insects and fish.

History

A legume native to Central America and Mexico, jicama is a perennial vine that grows to a length of 20 feet or more and has compound leaves with pointed edges.

Where Grown

Jicama is available from November through May and can be purchased in Mexican markets and most large supermarkets.

Jicama requires a very long and warm growing season. Most of the jicama available in U.S. supermarkets is imported from Mexico and South America, although the plant is also grown in parts of east and southeast Asia.

Sources:

[Encyclopedia of Foods: A Guide to Healthy Nutrition](#). Dole Food Company: 2002.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jicama>

OCTOBER – Featured Vegetable: JICAMA

WASH. PEEL.

EAT.



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Types

The two most popular cultivated forms of jicama:

- jicama de agua – produces a translucent juice; is usually preferred,
- jicama de leche – has elongated roots and a milky juice; is less familiar.

Nutrients

- High in vitamin C
- A good source of fiber
- A fair source of potassium

Sources:

Encyclopedia of Foods: A Guide to Healthy Nutrition. Dole Food Company: 2002.

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