

AUGUST – Featured Fruit: PAPAYA



WASH. SLICE. SCOOP.



(how easy is that?)



Hello, I'm Pono Papaya<sup>1</sup> and I'm a tropical fruit.

Papayas are delicious and come in different shapes, sizes, colors and flavors. Did you know I'm a Solo type of papaya? It's easy to tell because of my pear shape, yellow-green color on the outside, and gold or pinkish color on the inside. And it's no wonder papaya is so popular – it's sweet, juicy and nutritious. If you've never tasted papaya, give it a try. I know you're going to love it!

So, are you ready to come along with me on an exciting papaya adventure? Let's have fun exploring all the cool stuff about papaya.

## Facts

The botanical name for papaya is *Carica Papaya*.

The papaya plant is a member of the pawpaw family.

Botanically, papaya is a berry.

The black seeds found inside a papaya are edible and have a spicy, pepper-like flavor.

Some cultures call the papaya tree "the medicinal tree" because its seeds and leaves have been used to make medicine.

Papaya leaves and unripe papaya have an enzyme called Papain that breaks down protein in meat to make it tender. That's why papaya can be used as a meat tenderizer.

Papaya is rated as one of the most nutritious fruits.

Papaya is high in vitamin C and a good source of fiber and folate.

## History

Papaya has been grown in tropical regions of the world for as long as history has been recorded. It is believed to have come from southern Mexico and Central America. Let's take a closer look at papaya's history.

*1500s:* Papaya seeds brought to Panama and the Dominican Republic. Spanish and Portuguese sailors transported seeds to many subtropical countries including the Philippines, Malacca, and India.

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Source: <sup>1</sup>Dole 5 A Day. [www.dole5aday.com](http://www.dole5aday.com)

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*1600s:* Papaya growing spread to warm elevations in South and Central America, Southern Mexico, West Indies, Bahamas and to Bermuda. Papaya seeds were transported from India to Naples.

*1900s:* Papaya seeds were brought to Florida and probably came from the Bahamas. The Solo papaya variety from Barbados and Jamaica was grown in the Hawaiian Islands. Throughout the world, papaya has different names. It is called 'pawpaw' in Europe, 'fruta bomba' in Cuba, 'papaw' in Australia, 'papaye' in France, and 'mamao' in Brazil.

## Where Grown

Papaya plants grow year-round in tropical regions around the world, where the nights are cool and the days are warm.

Papaya plants grow tall, quickly. In just 10 to 12 months, they can grow 6 to 10 feet tall. When the plants reach this height, the fruit is ready for first harvest.

## Types

Papayas come in different colors, shapes and sizes. The different types of papayas are either Solo or Mexican varieties. It's easy to tell I'm a Solo papaya because I'm shaped like a pear. Solo papayas are the most popular in the United States.

**Solo papayas** are about 6 inches long and weigh around one pound. They have a green-yellow color on the outside with a yellow-orange or pink color inside.

**Mexican papayas** are much larger than the Solo types. They can be 2 feet long and weigh more than 10 pounds. Mexican papayas are more green than yellow on the outside with a salmon-red or bright orange color inside. And they are less sweet than Solo papayas. Because these papayas are large in size, they're usually available in pieces at the supermarket.