

LONGAN – PLU 4307



Description/Taste

Ranging in size from an olive to a small plum and spherical to ovoid in shape, Longans have a thin rough-to-prickly brown easy to remove shell called a pericarp covering its grayish-white translucent pulp. In the center of the juicy flesh is a large smooth jet-black seed with a white ovoid characteristic mark. Having a flesh reminiscent of a peeled grape, the flavor is wonderfully sweet and often described as a mysterious tasting blend of musk, spruce and gardenia.

Seasons/Availability

Longan is available from winter through spring.

Current Facts

New Longan varieties offer a better ratio of pulp to pit and many are "freestone".

Nutritional Value

Longan is an excellent source of potassium and vitamin C, and is very, very low in sodium.

Applications

Poach Longan in light sugar syrup. Peel and pit; use the same way as lychees or pitted cherries in dessert soups, smoothies, fruit salads, cocktails and sweet-and-sour dishes. May be paired with other Asian fruits or mushrooms. To store, keep refrigerated. Freeze fruit in airtight container for longer storage. Thaw just before using but leave fruit slightly frozen for best texture.

Ethnic/Cultural Info

The Longan is one of the most prized fruits in Asia. In Thailand especially, the Longan fruit is highly esteemed and is generally eaten at room temperature. The Thai name for this special fruit is Lam-Yai.

Geography/History

Native to China and India, Longan fruit is a major crop in Southeast Asia. The Chinese dubbed it "Dragon's eye" because of its white eye-shaped mark on the pit. The Longan and its close relative the lychee were introduced to the United States by W. N. Brewster, a missionary in Fukien Province, China. Not doing well in cold climates, this tropical tree is often enjoyed as an ornamental shade tree. It produces attractive thick dark evergreen leaves and clusters of drooping fruit. Rather majestic and absolutely gorgeous, this grand tree now grows in America. Since there is a current demand for specialty fruits in the United States, Florida's compatible climate will most likely help to produce this fruit commercially.