

PRICKLY CHAYOTE -



Description/Taste

Prickly chayote is small to medium in size, averaging 10-20 centimeters in length, and has a pear-like shape with deep linear indentations, folds, or puckers and many green-gold spines covering the surface. The number of spines will increase as the squash matures on the vine and the pale green rind is firm and is often discarded because of its tough nature. The creamy white flesh is crisp, and the central core contains one small, flat, edible, and light tan seed. Prickly chayote squash is crunchy and mild with a light, sweet flavor similar to a cucumber. In addition to the fruit, the leaves, shoots, flowers, and roots of the Prickly chayote are edible and utilized in culinary applications.

Seasons/Availability

Prickly chayote squash can be harvested year-round, with peak harvests in the fall and occasionally in late spring.

Current Facts

Prickly chayote, botanically classified as *Sechium edule*, is the fruit of a tropical climbing vine and a member of the Cucurbitaceae family along with gourds, cucumbers, and melons. Prickly chayote is one of several varieties of chayote that each have a slightly different color, shape, and texture, but they all contain a similar mild, flavor. In the commercial marketplace, the pale green, smooth chayote is more common to find than the Prickly chayote, as removing the spines can be time-consuming. Prickly chayote squash is used around the world in many different cultures and is predominately used as a carrier to soak up accompanying ingredients.

Nutritional Value

Prickly chayote is high in potassium, magnesium, folate, and also contains vitamin C and B6.

Applications

Prickly chayote is best suited for both raw and cooked applications such as grilling, steaming, baking, sautéing, stir-frying, and boiling. Seasoned chefs will note that Prickly chayote is preferred over smooth chayote for their sweeter flavor and firmer flesh. Prickly chayote can be used raw and sliced thin or shredded in both green and chopped salads. It can also be roasted and added to soups, curries, and stews, grilled and served as an accompaniment to main courses featuring pork and poultry, deep fried, or used to make pickles and chutneys. Prickly chayote pairs well with chile peppers, tomatoes, cream-based sauces, bacon, curry, mole, garlic, onions, both soft and hard cheeses, melon, cumin, coriander, oregano, cilantro, lemon or lime juice, nuts such as pistachios, pepitas, and almonds, legumes, and coconut milk. When handling the raw fruit, it is recommended to wear gloves or to peel or slice the fruit in water as the squash secretes a sticky, nontoxic residue which may cause some irritation to sensitive skin. The blossoms of the Prickly chayote can also be utilized in a fashion similar to that of zucchini blossoms, stuffed with soft cheese and fried. After two years of growth, the roots or tubers of the Prickly chayote can be consumed and are most commonly boiled, roasted, or fried. Prickly chayote will keep up to four weeks when wrapped in a paper towel, placed in a plastic bag, and stored in the refrigerator.

Spiny Chayote Squash Banchan



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I looked up on the internet how to get the spines off (run under cold water then scrub off the spines with a brush).

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

2 Spiny Chayote Squash

3 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon ground ginger

Preparation and Cooking

- 1) With a sharp knife, cut off the spiny skin. There is a seed in the middle as well so that will need to be removed as well. Dice the squash.
- 2) Take a wok and coat with olive oil.
- 3) Place the diced squash in the wok,
- 4) Peel and dice three cloves of garlic or use a garlic press (like I do) and add to the wok.
- 5) Add the ground ginger.
- 6) Saute the squash for about 15 minutes. It will not get soft (at least mine didn't).
- 7) Enjoy!