

Chinese Bitter Melon



4783 – PLU

Description/Taste

The Bitter melon is long and slender, similar to the shape of a standard cucumber with a rough, warty edible skin. The Bitter melon has an off-white, translucent, crisp, and bitter flesh and bears flat white bitter seeds. The fruit is harvested, young, when still green. As the fruit matures, the skin turns bright orange and the flesh increases in bitterness. Ripe fruits are saved for their seeds and replanted. The Bitter melon is considered the most bitter of all fruits. Its bitterness can be tempered by soaking the fruit or cooking it.

Current Facts

The Bitter melon is botanically classified as *Momordica Charantia* and a member of the Cucurbitaceae family. Bitter melon is also known as Winter melon, Bitter gourd, Karela, moqua, sinqua, opo, or balsam-pear. The Bitter melon plant is an herbaceous tendril bearing vine that is harvested for its leaves, seeds and fruit. The bitter compounds that the plant contains developed act as a natural pest deterrent.

Nutritional Value

Bitter melon advocates boast its amalgam of health benefits. It is rich in iron, contains twice the beta-carotene of broccoli, twice the calcium of spinach and twice the potassium of banana.

Applications

Bitter melon can be stir-fried, stewed, curried, steamed, braised or pickled. Dice Bitter melon and stir fry with shrimp, then serve with a fermented black bean sauce. Thinly slice Bitter melon into rounds, removing the seeds, then deep fry in peanut oil and serve over curd rice. Slice Bitter melon into half-moons, then boil until tender and serve as a side. This melon keeps up to one week. Before using Bitter melon, wash well, but do not peel.