

SNAKE GOURD – PLU 4527



Description/Taste

Snake gourds range from small to very large in size and are elongated, slender, curved, or straight. There are two different categories of Snake gourds. One type is extremely long with hard skin and is grown for ornamental purposes, and the other type ranges in size and is grown for eating and medicinal purposes. Snake gourds that are used for consumption have waxy green skin and are often speckled or striped with a lighter shade of green. The fruit is typically consumed when young, with longer varieties averaging 40-45 centimeters in length and smaller varieties 15-20 centimeters in length. The gourd may grow straight or in twisted curls and spirals. When Snake gourds are young, the seeds are fairly non-existent, the pulp around the seed mass is firm, and the flavor is mild and similar to a cucumber. As it matures, the rind becomes hard, turns red, and the flavor becomes bitter and gelatinous with many seeds.

Seasons/Availability

Snake gourds are available in the late summer through fall.

Current Facts

Snake gourds, botanically classified as *Trichosanthes cucumerina*, grow on annual, tropical vines and are some of the longest gourds in the world, belonging to the Cucurbitaceae family. Also known as the Serpent gourd, Snake squash, Club gourd, Chichinda, Padwal, and Pudalangai in the southern states of India, Snake gourds can grow 1-2 meters in length and when dried, can be made into a didgeridoo, an Australian aboriginal wind instrument. There are several varieties of Snake gourd that are cultivated and grown in India and other areas of the sub-tropics, and they are favored by chefs for their mild flavor and large size.

Nutritional Value

Snake gourds contain iron, magnesium, potassium, manganese, vitamins A, B, and C, fiber, calcium, and phosphorus.

Applications

Snake gourds are best suited for cooked applications such as stir-frying, baking, stuffing, and boiling. They can be prepared and used like zucchini, sautéed and served as a side dish or added to dishes with other sautéed vegetables. They can also be added to sabzi, chopped into curries, stuffed and grilled, made into a chutney, fried, blended into soups, sliced into stir-fries, or pickled for extended use. When the gourd is mature, the seed mass within is scraped out and used like tomato paste in various Indian dishes. Snake gourds pair well with turmeric, cumin, coriander, mustard, red chiles, curry leaves, coconut, onion, garlic, potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkin, lentils, tofu, poultry, pork, and beef. They will keep for 2-3 weeks when stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

South Indian Style- Snake Gourd with Lentils



Ingredients

4 servings

1. 2 cups snake gourd, peeled and chopped small
2. 1/4 cup chana dal, soaked for 30 minutes
3. 1 onion finely chopped
4. 1 chopped tomato (optional)
5. 2 green chillies
6. 1 sprig Curry leaves
7. 1 tbsp chopped ginger
8. 1 tsp mustard seeds
9. 2 pinches asafoetida
10. 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
11. to taste Salt
12. 3 tbsp coconut oil
13. For grinding:
14. 1/4 cup fresh grated coconut
15. 1 tsp cumin seeds
16. 1/2 tsp whole black pepper
17. 2 dry red chillies
18. 1 sprig curry leaves

Steps - 20 minutes

1. In a pan heat up 2 tbsp coconut oil, add mustard seeds when it splutter add asafoetida, chopped ginger, onion, green and curry leaves.
2. Add chopped tomato.
3. Fry just for a few minutes, soaked and drained chana dal. Cover and simmer.
4. When dal is half cooked add turmeric powder and chopped snake gourds along with the salt. Cook on medium heat with the lid on.



5. Grind the ingredients given for grinding into a fine paste.
6. When snake gourd is cooked add the coconut-spice paste, mix well.
7. Cook for another few minutes. Switch off the flame, drizzle remaining coconut oil on top.
8. Ready to serve

