

STAR APPLE (CAMITO) - 3211



Description/Taste

Star Apples are round and approximately two to four inches in diameter at maturity. Its skin is smooth, leathery and depending on variety either purple to red or yellow to green in color. The inner rind of the purple variety is dark purple and in green fruits white. This rind surrounds a soft, creamy, white pulp as well as six to eleven gelatinous seed cells. When the fruit is cut in half the gelatinous cells form a star shape, hence the name of the fruit. Some of the cells encase small, pointed, flat, black seeds. Fruits can contain anywhere between three and ten seeds, those with fewer seeds tend to have the best flavor. The pulp of the Star Apple is aromatic and has a tropical sweet flavor with nuances of apple, lychee and persimmon. Ripe Star Apples will be slightly wrinkled and dull in color with a soft give when squeezed. To fully ripen, keep at room temperature and once ripe store in the refrigerator.

Seasons/Availability

Star Apples are available in the spring.

Current Facts

The Star Apple is of the family Sapotaceae and relative of the mamey sapote and the green sapote. They are known by variety of different names such as golden-leaf tree, caimito maduraverde in Spain, caimite and caimitier in France and cainito and ajara in Portugal. There are two different varieties of Star Apples one with purple skin and one with green skin. Both varieties are tree ripened and unlike many tree fruits will not fall off the tree when mature so must be picked by hand when ripe.

Nutritional Value

The pulp of the Star Apple provides a fair amount of vitamin C, calcium and phosphorous. Its pulp has also been found to be rich in phytochemicals aka antioxidants, which have been shown to help to prevent certain cancers and support a healthy immune system. The pulp of the Star Apple has been used to treat sore throats and reduce the inflammation associated with pneumonia and laryngitis. When ground the seeds can be used as a tonic and diuretic. In some areas both a beverage made of the bark of the Star Apple tree and the pulp of the fruit are used to treat diarrhea and dysentery. If eaten in excess the Star Apple can cause constipation.

Applications

Star Apples are prized for the soft sweet pulp they contain, which is most often enjoyed raw as is but can be used in a number of dessert and beverage preparations as well. Both the skin and rind of the fruit are bitter and inedible, to prepare slice in half and use a spoon to remove the pulp. Aside for a few medicinal purposes typically the seeds are not consumed. Best when served chilled the pulp of the fruit can be used in beverages, parfaits, sorbet and both green and fruit salads. Its flavor pairs well with mango, oranges, condensed milk, coconut milk and whipping cream.