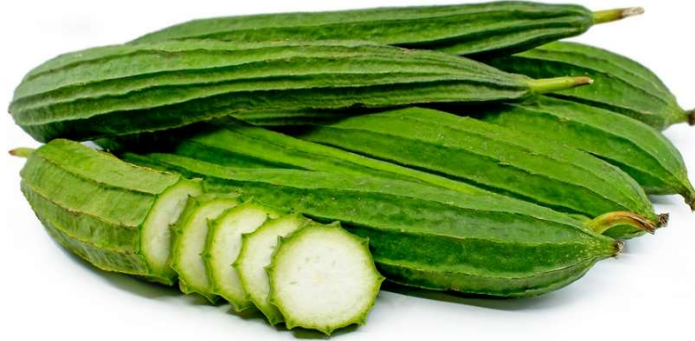


Sin Gua (Chinese Okra)



4656 – PLU

Description/Taste

Sin Gua or Chinese okra is an elongated gourd with dark green skin, lined with evenly spaced ridged peaks, that taper at each end. They can be harvested when young, around 15 to 25 centimeters long, but average 30 to 40 centimeters in length and 5 to 7 centimeters wide. Chinese okra is tender; the bright white flesh has spongy texture and offers a silky, subtly sweet flavor when cooked. As it matures, the skin becomes tough and bitter and the flesh becomes fibrous and woody.

Current Facts

Sin gua, also referred to as Angled Luffa, is not related to the small vegetables known as 'okra' in the United States. It is botanically classified as *Luffa acutangula* and is known in Southeast Asia as Sinkwa and Torai in India. The subtropical vine and member of the family Cucurbitaceae is related to squash, melons and cucumbers. There are two varieties of *Luffa* cultivated for culinary use, the other is a smooth-skinned variety *L. aegyptiaca* (or *L. cylindrica*). Chinese okra is prepared and eaten like other summer squash varieties.

Nutritional Value

Sin gua is an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of dietary fiber, calcium and vitamin A. The ridged gourd also contains iron and protein.

Applications

Sin gua can be eaten raw when young and around 15 centimeters long and 3 centimeters thick. More mature fruits can be prepared much like zucchini. They are peeled and sliced or cut into bite-sized pieces for stir-fry, battering and deep frying, to add to fish soups, dahls, or curries. Chinese okra will soak up the flavors of whatever liquid it is prepared in. In India the gourd is used in sabzis, or cooked vegetable dishes, simmered in a spice-filled gravy along with peas, cauliflower and tomatoes. Add it to stews or other vegetable dishes. Pair with seafood, spicy chiles, tamarind, soy sauce, cilantro, eggs and potato. Store Chinese okra in the refrigerator for up to a week.