

Jicama

Pachyrhizus erosus

Fabaceae family



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Geography of Cultivation and Origin

- Cultivated in Mexico and Central America since pre-Columbian times. Is thought to have originated in the Andes Mountains.
- In the 17th century Jicama spread to parts of Asia.
 - Philippines > China > Indonesia > Singapore
- It was also used as a staple onboard ships because it stored well.
 - It could be eaten raw and was also thirst quenching.

Morphological Description

- Tubers grow underground and looks similar to a turnip on the outside. Inside is comparable to an apple.
 - Has a crisp, white, solid flesh.
- Vine can reach a height of 13–16 feet.
- Root can reach lengths of up to 6.5 feet and weigh up to 44 pounds.



Features of Cultivation

- Currently it is mostly cultivated in Mexico, South China and United States.
- Jicama is frost tender so it requires 9 months without frost for an ideal harvest.
 - Cooler areas can still produce Jicama, but will have smaller tubers.
- Seeds require warm temperatures to germinate, so bottom heat is recommended.
- Tropical areas can sow seeds at anytime. Subtropics should sow seeds in the Spring after the soil has warmed.

Plant Uses

- Can be eaten raw and is a great source of vitamin C and is fat free.
 - Usually eaten with chili powder, cilantro, lemon or lime.
- In cooking it can be used as a substitute for water chestnuts in Chinese dishes.
 - Beneficial because they absorbed the flavor of other foods very well.
- It also appear in different recipes for stews, juiced drinks, fruit bars and stuffings.



Interesting Facts

- Often compared to apples but unlike apples, jicama does not turn brown when exposed to the air after being cut.
- Jicama has other nicknames including Mexican potato and Mexican yam bean.
- The vine, flowers and leaves can be poisonous.
 - Mature seeds can also be toxic.
 - They all contain the toxin rotenone, which acts as an insecticide .

Possible Health Benefits

- Contains Inulin which promotes bone health by enhancing absorption of calcium from other foods, protecting against osteoporosis.
- Inulin also has a prebiotic role in the GI system, which helps promote “good bacteria”.
- High fiber content helps maintain good GI health.
- Low glycemic index makes it great for diabetics.

Nutritional Content

- Jicama is composed of approximately 90% water. Only trace amounts of proteins and lipids can be found.
- It has very little amount of saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.
- It is a great source of potassium and Vitamin C.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 cup slices (120g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 46 Calories from Fat 1

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0.11 g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0.03 g **0%**

Trans Fat

Cholesterol 0 mg **0%**

Sodium 4.8 mg **0%**

Potassium 180 mg **5%**

Total Carbohydrate 10.58 g **4%**

Dietary Fiber 5.88 g **24%**

Sugars 2.16 g

Sugar Alcohols

Protein 0.86 g

Vitamin A 25.2 IU 1%

Vitamin C 24.24 mg 40%

Calcium 14.4 mg 1%

Iron 0.72 mg 4%

Sources

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