

# Dragon Fruit

## History

Dragon fruit originates in Central and South America. We call this interesting plant a fruit, but it is actually a cactus. Dragon fruit is grown in Asia, Mexico, Central America, South America, and Israel today.

Its textured, scaly skin comes in pink or yellow, while its flesh may be red or white with scattered, tiny, black seeds. The flesh should be scooped out of the skin- it is easiest to do with a spoon. It has a crunchy texture and sweet flavor, like a kiwi or a pear. The red flesh of the dragon fruit contains lycopene, which has been associated with lower cancer and heart disease risk. The skin should not be eaten.

## Varieties

**Yellow Dragon** is a sweet fruit with bumpy yellow skin and creamy white flesh.

**Costa Rican Sunset** has pink skin and dark pink flesh with very few seeds.

**Makisupa** has pale pink and green skin and bright pink flesh, and it leaves the mouth feeling dry.

**David Bowie** is a smaller, slender fruit with pink skin, white flesh, and a lemon taste.

**Harpua** is medium sized and has a melon flavor.

**Natural Mystic** has pink skin, deep pink flesh, and is grown in Florida.

**Purple Haze** has few seeds, a kiwi-like flavor, and grow up to two pounds each.

**Red Jaina** is best used for juicing.

**Vietnamese Jaina** is Vietnam's #1 dragon fruit variety for export.

**Voodoo Child** is egg-sized and has a very sweet, grape-like taste.

## Fun Origins

The dragon fruit is marketed alongside a fantastic fable. As legend has it, a dragon fruit is the last thing to come out of a fire-breathing dragon's mouth. They say the flame comes from the base of the tail, called "jaina" meaning "the sweetest tasting." Once the dragon was slayed the warrior would gather the fruit to present to the emperor.



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