

# Pineapple

## History

Pineapple is believed to have originated in the Brazilian rainforests. Pineapples were harvested by the native tribes and spread throughout South and Central America. When Christopher Columbus landed in the new world in 1493, the Spaniards named the fruit “piña” due to its resemblance to a pinecone. Columbus brought the pineapple with him back to Spain, where the fruit became very popular with Queen Isabella. The fruit was grown across Europe in greenhouses. The English added the word “apple” to the end of piña, to associate the new fruit with other delicious fruits. Pineapples were imported to Europe in the 16th century and became extremely popular. After this, the pineapple spread to India and later Australia.

## Varieties

There are two main types of pineapple that are sold in the United States. The cayenne pineapple is commonly grown in Hawaii. The fruit has golden yellow skin and long, pointed leaves shooting from one tuft. The red Spanish pineapple is shorter and thicker than the cayenne and has a reddish, golden-brown color. A third variety of pineapple called the sugarloaf is grown in Mexico and is growing in popularity due to its sweet flavor. This pineapple is very susceptible to damage during travel so is not often shipped to the US.

## Fun Facts

- Pineapples can weight up to 20 pounds.
- Pineapples do not ripen after they have been picked.
- Caribbean males would run barefoot through pineapple plantings as a rite of manhood.
- Pineapple crowns were placed outside the entrance to Caribbean homes to symbolize hospitality and friendship.
- Pineapples contain an enzyme, bromelain, that can be used as a meat tenderizer.
- The pineapple plant is actually an herb.
- Pineapple is an excellent source of vitamin C.
- A pineapple plant will only produce one pineapple each growing season.
- A harvested pineapple is actually a collection of small, individual fruits fused together.



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