

Rambutan

History

Rambutans only grow in tropical climates. This funny looking fruit grows in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, and other Asian countries.

Rambutans are often confused with their very similar cousins- lychees and longans. Rambutan is similar to lychees, but not as juicy. Its taste can be compared to a grape. The fruit is usually enjoyed raw, but it could be stewed or served with other fruits or baked goods for a sweet treat.

The soft, flexible spines are called spinterns. They may feel funny, but are not sharp. Rambutans lose a lot of water after being picked. If you are storing rambutan in the fridge, wrap the whole fruit in plastic wrap to retain moisture. This should keep the rambutan good for one week. Even if the spine and rind darkens, the fruit is still okay.

Once the tree flowers, it will be three or more months until ripe fruit is available.

Rambutan will start green, then yellow, before finally turning red. The fruit grows in clusters, resembling a bunch of grapes. If most of the cluster is ripe, it can all be cut off together. Ripeness is typically indicated by the bright red color.

How to Eat It

1. Make a shallow cut or tear in the spiny rind.
2. Pry or tear the rind open to expose the fruit.
3. Squeeze or “pop” the fruit out of the rind.
4. Bite into the fruit, taking caution to avoid the single seed in the middle.
5. Enjoy!



Language Lesson

Rambutan is called:

- *Ramboutanier* in French.
- *Ramboetan* in Dutch.
- *Ramboostan* in India.
- *Shao tzu* in China.
- *Chom chom* in Vietnam.

Fun Facts

- The name comes from the Malaysian word for “hair.”
- At the center of the fruit is a very bitter tasting seed.



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