

# Star Fruit

## History

It is believed the star fruit originated in either Sri Lanka or the Moluccas, the islands of Indonesia. It spread throughout Asia and has been cultivated there for centuries. Star fruit is commonly grown in southern China, India, and the Philippines.

The fruit is relatively new to North and South America. It was first introduced to Florida in 1887 but is viewed as a decorative fruit and has not been planted on a wide scale. Star fruit was introduced to the Caribbean islands, Central America, South America, and Hawaii in 1935.

Today, star fruit is widely grown and consumed in Asia. The fruit is growing in popularity in the United States. To meet this increasing need, the fruit is now commercially grown in Florida, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.



## Names

In Asia alone, the fruit has over 20 different names but most commonly is some variation of “belimbing.” When Spanish and Portuguese explorers arrived in Asia, they adapted the Indian word “karambal” and renamed the fruit “carambola” – which is still used today. The fruit was later renamed “star fruit” due to the shape made when it is cut.

## Fun Facts

- Star fruit is harvested when the green fruit has a tint of yellow
- When the fruit is cut crosswise, it forms a perfect star
- Star fruits do not need to be peeled or seeded- they can be eaten whole
- Two varieties of star fruit are grown- tart and sweet
- Early English travelers called the star fruit the “cucumber tree” when discovering the plant in Asia



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