

Synonymous with the summer season, this tropical fruit is versatile and packs a punch. We tell you how to incorporate the mango in your diet

mango bites

Text **BINDU GOPAL RAO**



The mango isn't called the 'king of fruits' for nothing. The versatility of mangoes stems from the fact that they can be used in so many ways in your diet such as in smoothies, juices, lassi or *aam panna* (a raw mango drink). You can also have raw mango salad, raw mango chutney, mango *shrikhand*, mango jam and, of course, mango rice. "Mango salsa is a refreshing way to use the fruit. There is no end to the ingredients and combinations you can experiment with. Mangoes pair well with shrimp as well as with chicken," says chef Ranveer Brar.

And while mangoes may have a bad reputation because of their sugar content, they do come with their share of benefits. "In Ayurveda, mangoes are considered to be useful in balancing all the doshas in the body specially the *vata* dosha (which controls the movement of the mind and the body). The mango finds a place in Ayurvedic cooking because it also fulfils the need of *sapt dhatu* (seven tissues according to Ayurveda) in the body," says Diwakar Balodi, senior sous chef at Ananda in the Himalayas, the luxury destination spa-resort.

THIS SPREAD: Pick from a mind-boggling variety of mango-based desserts at Monkey Bar — mango tarts, mango tres leche, mango lassi kulfi, mango falooda ice-cream sandwich!

Sanjay Ramchandran





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Aam panna is a popular summer drink.

The traditional Andhra mango pickle is made with raw mango, mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds and red chillies.

A fresh mango salsa makes for an easy appetiser.

A tall glass of mango lassi is a refreshing treat in the summers.



REGIONAL SPECIALITIES

During the summer, most local Indian cuisines incorporate mangoes as a flavouring ingredient. While it is common to toss mangoes into a salad or make pickles this time of the year, they can also be added to your fish curries. “There are also dishes like *pazha manga* from Kerala, a curry made with ripe mangoes — seed included. *Aamras* is a favourite breakfast preparation in Maharashtra. Puri with *aamrakhand* (mango *shrikhand*) is eaten across western India,” says Sudhir Nair, executive chef, at Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott in Bengaluru.

Eating chopped mangoes with rotis for breakfast is commonplace. In fact, each region has its own interpretation of the tropical fruit.

There’s *avvakai* mango pickle and *mamidikaya pappu* (an Andhra style mango dal preparation); Gujarat is famous for its *chunda* (raw mangoes

shredded and dissolved in sugar and spices). The tangy prawn and mango preparation is a Goan specialty, and drinks like *aam panna* are consumed across India.

A HEALTHY TWIST

In the hot and humid weather, mangoes boost the immune system by providing the body with vitamin A and C and multiple types of carotenoids. They make the body more alkaline, thereby acting as a shield against viruses.

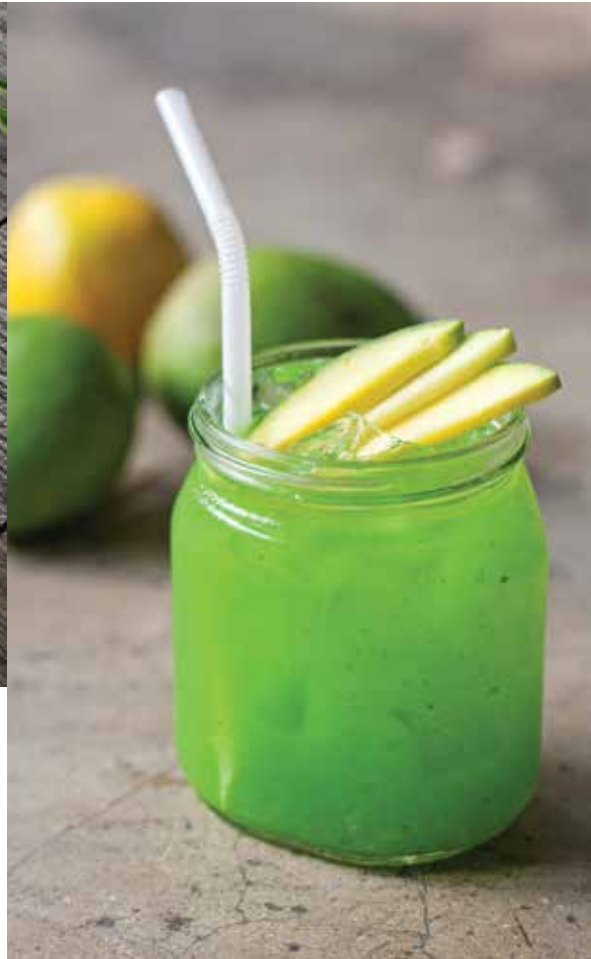
Alok Anand, executive chef at JW Marriott Kolkata, lists the goodness of the juicy stone fruit. “Eating mangoes cools the body down instantly and thus prevents heat strokes. The enzymes present in mangoes also aid digestion.”

Ishan Shah, co-owner of MAIA - Eat, Bake, Mom, a restaurant in Bengaluru, explains how to eat the fruit. “Mangoes are said to generate extra heat in the body. To



ABOVE: This raw mango fish curry is a traditional preparation from Kerala.

RIGHT: Raw mangoes are the perfect ingredient for a chilled summer drink.



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counter this, the secret is to soak mangoes in water for about three to four hours before consuming them. This reduces the heat in the fruit.” Incidentally, the leaves from mangoes are considered to be nourishing too. Simply boil the leaves in water and drink. This decoction is assumed to help control blood sugar.

TRADITIONS GALORE

Mangoes have been associated with religious ceremonies for ages. Its leaves are considered auspicious

and are hung from the archways of the front doors in Hindu homes. “Mango leaves are used in rituals and ceremonies to keep negative energies away,” points out Shradha Srivastava, a wellness and diet consultant with Healthians, a home diagnostic testing service. Mango twigs are used for havan, a religious fire meant to appease the gods in Hindu culture.

With the rise of Buddhism, mangoes came to represent faith and prosperity among the religion’s followers. “Mangoes were exchanged as gifts and became an important tool of diplomacy. During this period, Buddhist monks took mangoes with them wherever they went, popularising the fruit,” explains Y Kalyan, pastry chef at Monkey Bar.

And now, as it is officially the season for this much-loved fruit, make sure you add this dash of goodness to your diet and embrace the mango in all its myriad forms. 

DID YOU KNOW?

- Mangoes contain about **20 different vitamins** and **minerals** which make it a super fruit.
- A medium-sized ripe mango provides about **100-110 calories**.
- In **Buddhist lore**, **Lord Buddha** is shown resting in a grove of mango trees.

