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## Mango

**Common name:** Mango, Mangot, Manga, Mangou

**Botanical name:** *Mangifera indica*

**Family:** Anacardiaceae

**Origin:** The mango is native to southern Asia, especially Burma and eastern India. They were taken from India to Malaya and eastern Asia in the fourth and fifth centuries BC and then to East Africa in the tenth century AD. The Portuguese carried them to West Africa and from there to Brazil in the early sixteenth century. Mangos were introduced to California in 1880.

**Description:** Mango trees make handsome landscape specimens and shade trees. It can grow to 20–30 meters tall and live for over 300 years. The leaves are dark green above and pale below, usually red while young. The flowers are yellowish or reddish in colour. The fruits grow at the end of a long, stringlike stem and are 5–20 cm long, kidney shaped. When ripe, the fruit is pale green or yellow, marked with red, according to the cultivar. The skin is inedible and contains a sap which is allergenic to many people. The quality of the fruit is based on the scarcity of fiber and minimal turpentine taste.

**Uses:** Mangos are eaten fresh. They are often used in tropical fruit salads, in Thai dishes, as mango juice and in icecreams and sorbets. Half ripe or green mangos can be eaten with salt or are cooked to make mango chutney. The sour flavouring, amchur, is made from sliced mango that has been dried and seasoned with turmeric before being ground.

Kernels extracted from the woody seeds provide famine food in India or are pressed for oil which can be used in soap manufacture. Flour can be made from mango seeds. The wood is used for rafters, boats, flooring, furniture and other applications. In West Africa, the gum from the trunks is used to mend crockery. There are also many different traditional medicinal uses for all parts of the tree.

**Allergens:** Urushiol, cardol, limonene

**Allergy:** The common forms of allergic reaction to mango include bullous cheilitis, [urticaria](#), and [contact allergic dermatitis](#) from contact with either the sap of the tree (eg woodworking or climbing the tree) or from contact with the skin of the fruit. Mango has also been associated with respiratory and food allergens. In a large study from France 6% of severe food allergies were due to mango.

**Cross reactions:** Other anacardiaceae spp, particularly cashew nut and poison ivy (*Rhus* or *Toxicodendron*). Mango may cross react with various respiratory allergens including mugwort pollen, birch pollen, celery, and carrot. Latex allergy (and therefore possibly papaya, avocado, banana, chestnut, passion fruit, fig, melon, kiwi, pineapple, peach, and tomato).

**Other information:** The mango tree (*Mangifera indica*) appears in many Indian myths and legends and is considered sacred by Hindus who believe that it is a transformation of Prajapati – the lord of creatures. Its leaves and flowers are made into garlands for decorating Hindu temples.

**Patch test:** Leaves, bark, skin (but not the fruit).

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