

Litchi chinensis

Lychee fruit



Lychee is a tropical fruit with potential health benefits. It's an excellent source of vitamin C and antioxidants.

It may also have anti-inflammatory and cardioprotective qualities, among other things.

Keep reading to learn more about the health benefits of lychee fruit, including its nutritional profile.

What is a lychee fruit?

Lychees are the fruit of the evergreen tree *Litchi chinensis*, which grows in tropical and sub-tropical regions. China is the primary producer of the fruit, followed by India.

The history and cultivation of lychees go back as far as 2,000 B.C. Trusted Source, according to Chinese records. The Chinese Imperial Court served it as a delicacy.

Lychee fruits have a tough inedible skin that is red or pink when ripe. The pale edible flesh inside surrounds an inedible brown seed.

People know Litchi chinensis by various names Trusted Source, including:

litchi

lychee nut

leechee

Chinese cherry

The fruit has a sweet floral flavor, and people typically eat it fresh or canned. Manufacturers use lychee to make ice creams, juice, and sauces. It is also available in some Asian supermarkets in dried form.



Health benefits

A 2015 study^{Trusted Source} indicates that lychee flesh is a rich source of plant compounds called proanthocyanidins. According to the study, proanthocyanidins may have the following health benefits:

- antioxidant
- anti-diabetic
- anti-angiogenic, which means preventing tumors from growing blood vessels
- anti-carcinogenic, which means inhibiting or preventing cancer
- anti-inflammatory
- cardioprotective
- Proanthocyanidins are also present in other fruits such as apples, blueberries, and grapes.

According to a 2016 review^{Trusted Source}, scientists have found beneficial effects of lychee extracts from various plant parts in both laboratory and human studies. The scientists found the extract inhibits cancer cells and viruses, protects the liver, and enhances exercise performance.

However, it's important to note that someone may not get the same benefits from eating the fruits as scientists achieved with laboratory-produced extracts.

Another study^{Trusted Source} indicated that lychee pulp, particularly the dried type, has anti-tumor properties.

The authors concluded that dietary consumption of the fruit might be of great benefit.



Cautions

Lychee may lower [Trusted Source](#) blood sugar levels.

In 2014, [scientists Trusted Source](#) investigating outbreaks of unexplained illness among children in India discovered that lychees were the cause. The malnourished children ate unripened lychees from an orchard. The combination of a compound in the fruit called hypoglycin A and low blood sugar caused acute neurological effects and even death.

People who are eating typical amounts of ripe lychees should be fine, but those who are on medications for diabetes should be cautious.

People who are taking the following drugs [Trusted Source](#) also should be cautious as lychee can interact with them:

anticoagulants such as warfarin or heparin

antiplatelet drugs such as clopidogrel

nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen or naproxen

anticancer agents

antivirals

cardiovascular agents

cholesterol- or lipid-lowering agents

immune-modulating agents

pain relievers

herbal supplements such as Ginkgo biloba

There have also been some rare cases of people having allergic reactions to lychee fruit, as noted by an older study. [Trusted Source](#)

Summary

Fresh lychee counts towards the two cups per day of fruit that experts recommend. It is an excellent source of vitamin C and also contains fiber and other vitamins and minerals.

The plant compounds in lychee have antioxidant properties which are beneficial to health.

A person should avoid eating too many processed lychee foods or drinks as they contain added sugars. People taking medications should also check with their

doctor before consuming moderate or large amounts of lychee.

