

# Red guavas

## Psidium guajava



### **Description/Taste**

Red guavas are plump and round or pear-shaped measuring 6 to 10 centimeters in diameter. Their smooth skin furrows at the base and matures from dark green to light green and yellow. They are firm with an aromatic, edible skin that softens as the fruit ripens. The flesh ranges from pale rose to a deep pink or red and has a fleshy central cavity with dozens of small, edible seeds. They have a sweet, tropical flavor with a hint of acid.

## Seasons/Availability

Red guavas are available year-round in tropical regions.

## Current Facts

Red guavas, known as the “apple of the tropics” in India, are botanically classified as *Psidium guajava*. Commonly referred to as the Apple guava, they are found in various tropical regions around the world, most commonly in India, Indonesia, and South America. There are dozens of varieties of Red guava, some developed in Hawaii and others in India. They are widely grown in a bio-geographical region referred to as “Sundaland,” an area encompassing the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan (Borneo), where their juice is often prescribed to treat the symptoms of dengue fever.



## Nutritional Value

Red guavas are high in vitamins A and C, thiamine, and riboflavin. The rind contains anywhere from 2 to 4 times more vitamin C than a citrus fruit. They also contain other essential B-complex vitamins, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, and iron. Red

guavas are a good source of lycopene and provide antioxidant, immune-boosting and digestive benefits.

## Applications

Red guava can be enjoyed raw, cut into pieces or cooked into sweet and savory applications. Wash and cut the fruit into chunks and add to tropical fruit salads or smoothies. Diced, chopped and crushed fruits are used in desserts like trifles and tarts. The fruits are crushed or pureed and strained, the resulting pulp used in cakes, muffins, panna cotta, and ice creams. The juice adds both color and flavor to any dish. It is cooked down and used for glazes for seafood or fish, in marinades or in sauces and reductions. Sugar is added to the puree for use in pastries, cookies, or breads. The high pectin content in Red guavas gives it excellent thickening properties for making pies, jams and pastes. Guava paste is used in pastries and paired with soft cheeses. They are preserved in syrups and canned. Ripen Red guavas at room temperature and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Washed and cut pieces or puree can be frozen for up to 8 months.



## Ethnic/Cultural Info

Red guavas are the fifth most commercially important fruits in India, after bananas, mango, citrus and papaya. They are grown for the fresh market as well as for processing into jellies, a sweet paste referred to as "cheese," and a sweetened guava beverage called "squash." The Indian Institute of Horticulture Research in Bangalore, located in south-central India, developed two different red-fleshed varieties, the Arka Kiran and Arka Rashmi. Bangalore, known locally as Bengaluru, and the surrounding areas are known as the 'land of Red guavas'.

## **Geography/History**

Red guavas are native to an area that stretches from southern Mexico to the tropical areas of South America. They are very common in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia, where they were introduced by Spanish and Portuguese explorers. During the mid-1800s they were brought to Florida in the United States from the Caribbean. Red guavas are widely cultivated in the south-central states of India and to a certain extent in South America, Mexico, California and Hawaii. They are commonly spotted at wet markets in India, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines, and at mercados and farmers markets in South America, Mexico, Hawaii and Southern California.