

Soursop Graviola *Annona muricata*



Soursop is **high in vitamin C, an antioxidant known to boost immune health**. The vitamin strengthens your immune system, improving its ability to defend against pathogens. It also promotes the destruction of free radicals, which can help to protect your skin and cells from environmental oxidative damage.

Soursop is a fruit that's popular for its delicious flavor and impressive health benefits.

It's also very nutrient-dense and provides a good amount of fiber and vitamin C for very few calories.

This article will look at some of the health benefits of soursop and how you can incorporate it into your diet.

What Is Soursop?

Soursop, also known as graviola, is the fruit of *Annona muricata*, a type of tree native to tropical regions of the Americas .

This prickly green fruit has a creamy texture and a strong flavor that is often compared to pineapple or strawberry.

Soursop is typically eaten raw by cutting the fruit in half and scooping out the flesh. Fruits range in size and can be quite large, so it may be best to divide it into a few portions.



A typical serving of this fruit is low in calories yet high in several nutrients like fiber and vitamin C. A 3.5-ounce (100-gram) serving of raw soursop contains:

- **Calories:** 66
- **Protein:** 1 gram
- **Carbs:** 16.8 grams
- **Fiber:** 3.3 grams
- **Vitamin C:** 34% of the RDI
- **Potassium:** 8% of the RDI
- **Magnesium:** 5% of the RDI
- **Thiamine:** 5% of the RDI

Soursop also contains a small amount of niacin, riboflavin, folate and iron.

Interestingly, many parts of the fruit are used medicinally, including the leaves, fruit and stems. It is also used in cooking and can even be applied to the skin.

Research has also unearthed a variety of health benefits for soursop in recent years.

Some test-tube and animal studies have even found that it may help with everything from alleviating inflammation to slowing cancer growth.

It's High in Antioxidants

Many of the reported benefits of soursop are due to its high content of antioxidants.

Antioxidants are compounds that help neutralize harmful compounds called free radicals, which can cause damage to cells.



Some research shows that antioxidants could play a role in reducing the risk of several diseases, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes .

One test-tube study looked at the antioxidant properties of soursop and found that it was able to effectively protect against damage caused by free radicals .

Another test-tube study measured the antioxidants in soursop extract and showed that it helped prevent damage to cells. It also contained several plant compounds that act as antioxidants, including luteolin, quercetin and tangeretin.

More research is needed to determine how beneficial the antioxidants found in soursop may be to humans.

It May Help Kill Cancer Cells

Although most research is currently limited to test-tube studies, some studies have found that soursop could potentially help eliminate cancer cells.

One test-tube study treated breast cancer cells with soursop extract. Interestingly enough, it was able to reduce tumor size, kill off cancer cells and enhance the activity of the immune system .

Another test-tube study looked at the effects of soursop extract on leukemia cells, which was found to stop the growth and formation of cancer cells.

However, keep in mind that these are test-tube studies looking at a strong dose of soursop extract. Further studies need to look at how eating the fruit may affect cancer in humans.

It Can Help Fight Bacteria

In addition to its antioxidant properties, some studies show that soursop may contain potent antibacterial properties as well.

In one test-tube study, extracts of soursop with varying concentrations were used on different types of bacteria known to cause oral diseases.

Soursop was able to effectively kill off multiple types of bacteria, including strains that cause gingivitis, tooth decay and yeast infections .

Another test-tube study showed that soursop extract worked against the bacteria responsible for cholera and *Staphylococcus* infections .

Despite these promising results, it's important to remember that these are test-tube studies using a highly concentrated extract. It's far greater than the amount you would typically get through your diet.

Further studies are needed to evaluate this fruit's potential antibacterial effects in humans.

It Could Reduce Inflammation

Some animal studies have found that soursop and its components may be able to help fight inflammation.

Inflammation is a normal immune response to injury, but increasing evidence shows that chronic inflammation could contribute to disease .In one study, rats were treated with soursop extract, which was found to decrease swelling and alleviate inflammation.

Another study had similar findings, showing that soursop extract reduced swelling in mice by up to 37% .

Though research is currently limited to animal studies, this may be especially beneficial in the treatment of inflammatory disorders like arthritis.

In fact, in one animal study, soursop extract was found to decrease the levels of certain inflammatory markers involved in arthritis.

However, more research is needed to evaluate the anti-inflammatory properties of this fruit.

It May Help Stabilize Blood Sugar Levels

Soursop has been shown to help regulate blood sugar levels in some animal studies.

In one study, diabetic rats were injected with soursop extract for two weeks. Those who received the extract had blood sugar levels that were five times lower than the untreated group .

Another study showed that administering soursop extract to diabetic rats reduced blood sugar levels by up to 75% .

However, these animal studies use a concentrated amount of soursop extract that exceeds what you might get through your diet.

Although more research on humans is needed, these findings suggest that soursop could be beneficial for those with diabetes when paired with a healthy diet and active lifestyle.



How to Eat Soursop

From juices to ice creams and sorbets, soursop is a popular ingredient found throughout South America and can be enjoyed in a variety of different ways.

The flesh can be added to smoothies, made into teas or even used to help sweeten baked goods.

However, because it has a strong, naturally sweet flavor, soursop is most often enjoyed raw.

When selecting fruit, pick one that is soft or let it ripen for a few days before eating. Then simply cut it lengthwise, scoop out the flesh from the rind and enjoy.

Keep in mind that the seeds of the soursop should be avoided, as they have been shown to contain annonacin, a neurotoxin that may contribute to the development of Parkinson's disease .

The Bottom Line

Test-tube and animal studies using soursop extract have uncovered some promising results regarding this fruit's potential health benefits. Still, it's important to remember that these studies are looking at the effects of a concentrated dose of soursop extract, much greater than the amount you would get from a single serving. However, soursop is delicious, versatile and can be a beneficial addition to your diet. When combined with a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle, this fruit may have some impressive benefits for your health.

