

# Is mango the luscious superhero of fruit?

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If mangoes could be any more of a nutritional hero, they might need to wear capes.

The luscious, sweet tropical fruits are packed with so many vitamins and minerals they are great for our hearts, skin, eyes, and digestive and immune systems.

Packing more than 20 vitamins and minerals, including high doses of vitamins A and C, mangoes hail from the cashew family and are also low-fat – one whole [mango](#) is about 207 calories. One cup of sliced mango is about 165 calories, and provides nearly 70% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C, which improves iron absorption, helps defend cells from damage and aids the immune system.

"Vitamin C is good for immunity," said Maya Vadiveloo, an assistant professor in the department of nutrition and food sciences at the University of Rhode Island.

"It's an antioxidant so it can help with oxidative stress in the body. The primary benefit, in addition to being a really good source of vitamin C, is that (mangoes) are a decent source of vitamin A, folate and are pretty high in fiber, which is beneficial for colon cancer prevention, [heart](#) disease and weight control."

Mangoes help protect and support the body in a number of ways, especially when they are consumed in whole form and not with the added sugars found in canned mangoes. They contain several antioxidant compounds which help protect or delay damage from "free radicals," unstable atoms or molecules that can damage cells and cause diseases such as cancer.

The fiber, [vitamin](#) and potassium content in the juicy [fruit](#) also helps reduce the risk of heart disease. "Apart from sodium reduction, potassium helps with blood pressure control, which is a major concern for most Americans," Vadiveloo said.

Although mango season typically runs from May to September, imported varieties of the fruit are available in the United States year-round. But not everyone should eat them.

Like the rest of the cashew family, which includes [poison ivy](#) and poison oak, mangoes contain urushiol, an oil that can cause the skin to erupt in rashes for some people. The oil is found in all parts of the plant, including the leaves, stems and even the roots.

Those with sensitivities to this oily substance might be able to eat mangoes by wearing gloves to remove the skin or having someone else remove it for them. "The severity of the allergy is very individual," Vadiveloo said, "so it's best to check with a physician to determine what you are particularly at risk for."

In addition to being low-fat, mangoes can aid in weight loss because their fiber content helps you stay full longer.

"One thing that is nice about mango is that people do combine it with different things, like salsa, and it can also be combined with a lot of vegetables. A great way to reduce your total calories is to combine fruits with some of the non-starchy leafy vegetables and make an interesting salad," she said, "or add some mango salsa to your fish."

Mangoes are healthy, but it's not the only fruit powerhouse out there, Vadiveloo said. Federal dietary guidelines recommend eating two cups of fruits daily.

Experts recommend people "consume varieties of fruits and vegetables because they each have a slightly different nutritional profile," she said. "So, it's best not to just eat mangos but also to have berries and melons and a variety of whole fruits without added sugar."



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