

How Healthy Are Mangoes?

The luscious tropical fruit is packed with flavor — and nutrients.

Mangoes: Delicious, Nutritious, and Surprisingly Versatile

Nutritional Highlights

- **Vitamin C:** Half a mango offers 61 mg—comparable to citrus fruits—boosting immunity and aiding iron absorption.
- **Potassium:** With 282 mg per half mango, it helps regulate blood pressure and counteract sodium's effects.
- **Fiber:** Provides ~10% of daily needs, supporting digestion, gut health, and cholesterol control.

Natural Sugar vs. Added Sugar

- Mangoes contain **23g of natural sugar** per half fruit—more than a cookie—but it's processed slowly due to fiber.
- Unlike refined sugar, mango's sugar doesn't cause sharp blood glucose spikes.

Health Benefits

- Supports **heart health**, **gut microbiome**, and **iron absorption** from plant-based foods.
- May help reduce risk of **stroke** and **high blood pressure** when consumed in moderation.

Smart Ways to Eat Mango

- **Frozen mango:** Just as nutritious as fresh (if unsweetened), great for smoothies.
- **Dried mango:** Much higher in sugar and calories—consume sparingly.
- **Ripeness test:** Gently press with your thumb; a slight give means it's ready.

Recipe Inspiration from NYT Cooking

Dish	Description
Mango With Chile-Lime Salt	<i>A tangy street-food-style snack with spice and zest.</i>
Mango-Avocado Salad	<i>Creamy and crunchy with a savory lime-fish sauce dressing.</i>
Mango Lassi	<i>A refreshing yogurt-based drink, optionally topped with nuts and cardamom.</i>
Poke Bowl	<i>Adds juicy tartness to fish and rice bowls.</i>

<i>Black Pepper Chicken With Mango</i>	<i>A skillet dish with rum, cashews, and sunshine-like flavor.</i>
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[ABS News Service/16.07.2025]

In India, the mango is known as the “king of fruits.” The fruit, and its tree and leaves, are symbols of prosperity, good luck and love.

There’s a lot to love nutritionally, too. Mangoes are rich in vitamin C and potassium. And they freeze well, making them a year-round smoothie staple.

Here’s what to know about their health attributes, along with delicious recipes from New York Times Cooking.

They’re high in sugar — but it’s not like eating a cookie.

One half of a peeled mango contains about 23 grams of sugar, which is more than twice what you get in a typical store-bought chocolate chip cookie.

But the natural sugar in mangoes doesn’t spike your blood glucose the way the added sugar in cookies does, said Jessica Higgins, a dietitian in the Lifestyle Medicine program at NYC Health + Hospitals Woodhull. That’s because your body has to break down the beneficial fiber in a mango to access the fruit’s sugar. This takes time, which gives your body a chance to gradually process the glucose. In a cookie, she said, the refined sugar is immediately available, which is why it can cause a spike.

One half of a mango has around 10 percent of your daily fiber needs, said Stephanie Rogus, an assistant professor and extension nutrition specialist at Texas A&M University. Mangoes aren’t quite as high in fiber as fruits like apples or pears — in part because we typically don’t eat the fibrous mango skin — but they still cross the “good source of fiber” threshold, Dr. Rogus said.

Beyond slowing down your digestion, the fiber in mangoes can help keep your blood cholesterol in check and support the good bacteria in your gut, said Maya Vadiveloo, a dietitian and associate professor of nutrition at the University of Rhode Island.

Their vitamin C levels are up there with citrus fruits.

One half of a mango contains 61 milligrams of vitamin C, similar to what you’d get from one half of a navel orange or a grapefruit.

Beyond vitamin C’s well-known immune-boosting properties, it can also help your body absorb iron from plant-based foods, Dr. Vadiveloo said.

The iron in foods like leafy greens and beans isn't as easily accessible as the iron you get from eating animal products, she said. Pairing these foods with vitamin C-rich foods like mango can help convert the iron into a more usable form.

Their potassium could help lower your blood pressure.

Bananas may be the most famous potassium-rich tropical fruit, but mangoes aren't that far behind. One half of a mango contains 282 milligrams; a medium banana has 422.

Potassium can help to counteract the heart disease risk that comes with consuming too much sodium, Ms. Higgins said. Excess sodium can cause your body to retain fluid, which can raise your blood pressure. Over time, high blood pressure can increase your risk for heart attacks and strokes. Potassium helps to balance your body's fluid levels, she said, so it can help bring your blood pressure back down.

What's the best way to eat mango?

Try it frozen.

If a ripe mango is nowhere to be found, Dr. Vadiveloo recommended buying frozen chunks. As long as the frozen kind doesn't contain added sugar, it's just as nutritious as fresh mango, she said.

Don't overdo it on the dried mango.

One-half cup of dried mango contains 255 calories and 53 grams of sugar — far more than the 50 calories and 11 grams of sugar you'd get from the same amount of fresh fruit.

"When we take all the water out, we're concentrating the sugars and the calorie-containing macronutrients," Ms. Higgins said. "That's a pretty big difference."

To judge ripeness, use your thumb.

Ms. Higgins recommended using what she called the "press method" to select a perfectly ripe mango. When you gently press your thumb into the fruit, you should feel just a slight give.

Here are some fresh ways to enjoy that perfect mango, from NYT Cooking.

1. Mango With Chile-Lime Salt



In this take on a classic Mexican street-food snack, mango is sprinkled with a blend of ground chile, lime zest and salt to bring out its tang.

2. Mango-Avocado Salad With Lime Vinaigrette



A savory lime-and-fish-sauce dressing coats this creamy, crunchy salad. Pair with a protein and you've got dinner.

3. Mango Lassi



This refreshing South Asian drink blends ripe, sweet mango with yogurt and milk (or water). Topping it with pistachios, almonds and cardamom is optional — and delicious.

4. Poke Bowl



The poke bowl duo of chopped fish and rice can take on endless additions. Here, mango gives the savory meal a dose of juicy tartness.

5. Black Pepper Chicken Thighs With Mango, Rum and Cashews



Stirring mango into a sizzling skillet of chicken and spiced cashews makes this hearty meal taste like sunshine.