

Longan from Florida¹

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Description

Longan is originally from southern China, southwest India and Sri Lanka and it was introduced to Florida in 1940. In Chinese it is pronounced as “Lung-ngan,” which means dragon eye. In China, the folk medicine recommends longan fruits to contract blood vessels and to treat nervous disorders. The roots are used to treat diabetes. In many Spanish speaking countries it is known as “Mamoncillo chino.” The round fruits have a yellow brown rind with a crispy translucent, sweet and aromatic pulp. Longan is a good source of phosphorus, vitamin C, and potassium.

Supply

Heaviest production is in August, with a lighter supply in mid July and early September. Some fruit is available year-round from off-season blooms induced by special fertilizer applications.

Month	Supply
January	-
February	-
March	-
April	-
May	-
June	-
July	Light
August	Heavy
September	Light
October	-
November	-
December	-

Packing for Shipment

A total of 25 to 35 fruits are packed per pound as grade “A” (top quality). Typically small clusters of longan fruits are packed in 5-lb, 10-lb and 25-lb fiberboard boxes mostly for the Asian-American market.

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Postharvest Live

Longan will not ripen off the tree, so they must be picked ripe, when the pulp is at its optimum sweetness. Hydrocooled longan may have a shelf-life of up to five weeks and should be stored at 38-41°F (3-5°C) and 90-95% relative humidity. For highest quality, it is imperative to maintain the cold chain from farm to the retail store.

Preparation

Fruit is peeled, pitted, and eaten out of hand; added to fruit cups; and blended with ice cream and gelatin. Canned longan in syrup and dried fruits are very popular in Asian countries. Fruit is baked in pies and it is much used in Asian cuisine. Unpeeled longan can be frozen and later thawed for immediate consumption.