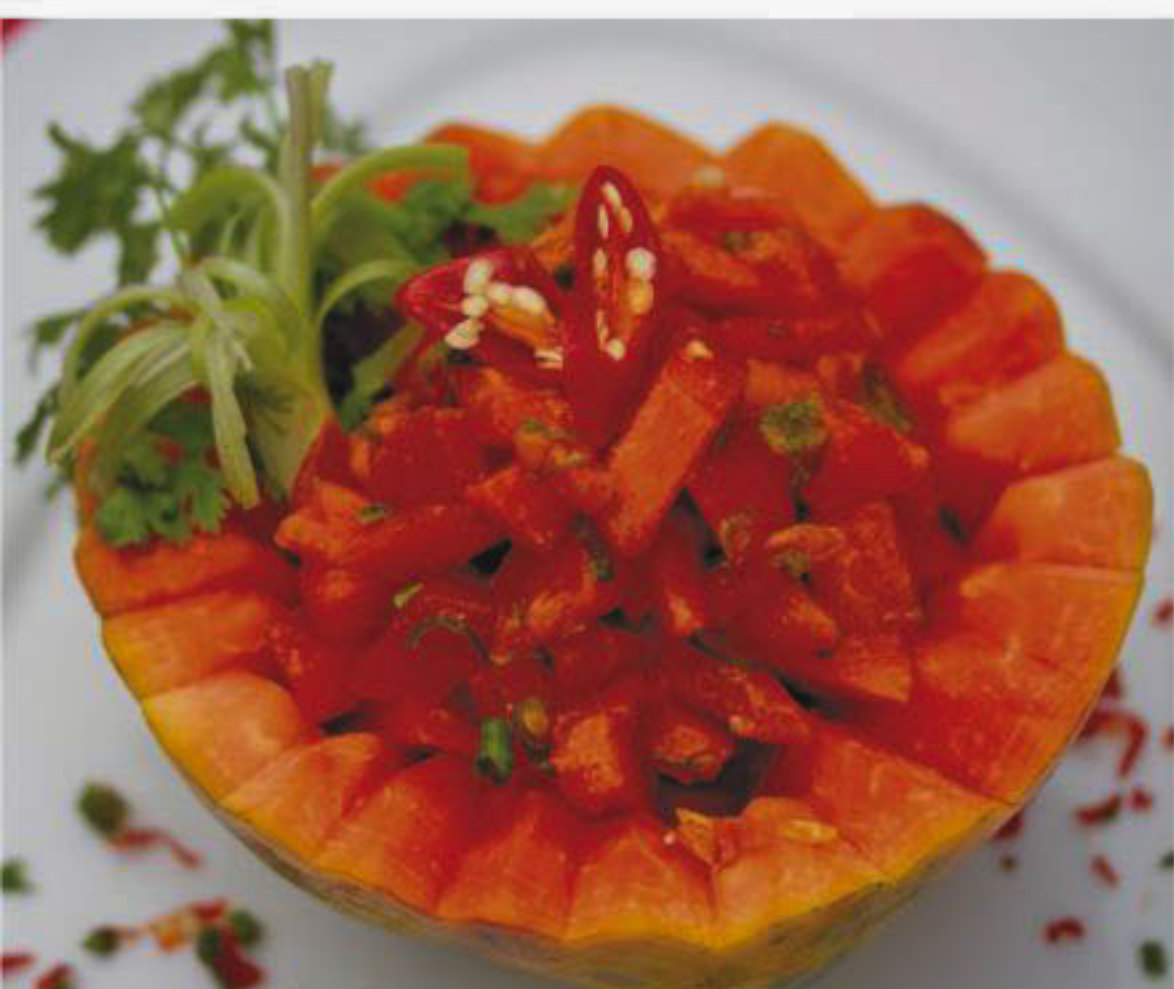


A fruity summer

One of my fondest memories of childhood was looking forward to a large basket of mangoes sent from Rajshahi. I would count the days till the mangoes were ripe enough so we could open the basket. And there they were: smooth, luscious, yellow mangoes staring at me as if the purpose of their creation was just to satisfy my voracious appetite.



The summer fruits of Bangladesh are a delight – jackfruit, lychees, mangoes, watermelons, pineapples and an assortment of berries. Although, jackfruit verily is the national fruit of the country, people have greater devotion towards mangoes.

Since the beginning of summer, mangoes have been highly in demand. Whether it is chopped green mango served with kashondi (mustard paste) or ripe mango smoothie, no other fruit can be a more obvious choice on a hot, sultry day. However, if you ask me, one of my most favourite fruity delights would be a large bowl of lychees. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than gorging on ripe, juicy lychees. Although they are usually eaten fresh, lychees can also make an excellent drink. Add some ice cubes and voila! There you have it, nothing like a chilled lychee drink to beat the heat with ease. The only drawback is that lychees are available in the market for a very short time.

Pineapples are a vital element for great fruit salads. This tropical fruit is rich in vitamins A and C, and potassium. For those who do not have a sweet tooth, pineapples

are a treat because they can be either sweet or tangy and sour, depending on the type available in the market. Of course, pineapples are also great pizza toppings and one can never deny a pineapple shake to start with.

As the summer heat weigh us down, we search for means to prevent us from being completely parched. As tempting as it is to indulge in carbonated, fizzy drinks, it is not ideal for health. Thus nature provides a more refreshing, healthier alternative – coconut water. Although strictly not a summer harvest, come summer, every corner of the road, you will find a street vendor offering coconut water straight out of the green shell with a straw. The pure drink can revitalise both your mind and body like none other. Not only will it quench your thirst on a scorching summer day but it will also provide your body with vitamins, minerals, and electrolytes.

Maybe after green mangoes, watermelons are the next fruit to fulfil our palate during the early days of summer. Watermelon is an exemplar fruit since it does not contain any fat or cholesterol and

is a splendid source of vitamins A, B, and C. Watermelon seeds are also edible. Many part of Asia are known to eat roasted or salted watermelon seeds and, unripe watermelon is also used similarly to squash.

Jaam (Jave plum) is a popular fruit in our country. This fruit is quite versatile given that there are many ways of consuming this delicacy. Some of you may already be nostalgic for the early days of jaam bharta by your grandmothers.

Among all fruit juices, my personal favourite would be bael (wood apple). Although processing bael can be an arduous task, it is worth the effort. Bael has very hard skin and a sticky pulp. The insides of a bael fruit are highly fragrant and also rich in therapeutic value. Not only does it make a refreshing juice for breakfast but it is also used as a digestive aid.

Summer can be stressful for all of us. The torrid heat is harsh for our health and thus it is vital for us to consume up to five serving of fruits a day to maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

By Mayesha Raidah

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad