



MANGO ON THE WAY: From orchard to the table

During summer, mangoes take over every household in Bangladesh. Sometimes in the form of snacks, sometimes in the form of substitute for a meal, and sometimes just because...why not? But ever wonder how the mangoes come to your table from the field?

Different routes

Mangoes have different channels that take them from the field to the consumer. For example, it can run through small farmers selling their crops to a wholesaler, or it could be through different one large intermediary, also called a "bepari." The 'bepari' is essentially a businessman willing

to take a chance on mangoes, and buys the entire garden's produce at various stages—their bidding starts as early as when the mango flowers bloom.

"The beparis come when the mukul (flower) shows. They walk through the mango garden, watch the *mukul* carefully and then make an estimate. Then they bid for trees or the whole garden. If the offers are good, we accept them. After that, it's entirely up to the bepari. Whatever happens, it's their concern," said Shariful, a mango farmer from Chapai Nawabganj.

Not all trees are sold to the beparis. Chapai Nawabganj is the mango capital of Bangladesh and most of the mangoes that are produced here circulate through a different set of channels. Recently, a large number of gardeners have resorted to



online business and they can sell mango directly over a phone call. Mangoes that are to be exported are usually nurtured in protective bags and will also follow a different route. Exports of mangoes has been increasing lately and keeps showing great potential for the coming days.

When does it start?

The farmers are well aware of the condition of the mangoes and they also account for the ripeness and the duration and path it has to take to reach the consumers. They take all these into account when they collect the delicious fruits from the trees. Usually, collection starts late afternoon or very early in the morning. This goes on for a few hours until a few maunds of mangoes are collected. Then it goes into the baskets or crates.

Each farmer has a contact with a van or a transport of some sort. Collecting mangoes and taking them to the wholesale market is a daily affair during harvesting season and therefore a fixed transport is imperative for their business. Once collected and packed in baskets, the mangoes go from the farmer to the wholesale market, inside baskets loaded either on bicycles or vans.

The road starts here

The wholesale market is where the real journey starts for the mangoes. Till now the fruits were under the tender nursing and caring of the farmers, but once they arrive at the wholesale market, the mangoes are ready for their journey. The wholesale markets are always buzzing with people from all across the country. The Kansat wholesale market at Chapai Nawabganj, is well known for its sheer size and every year this market supplies mangoes to at least 55 districts in the country.

There's usually a bargaining battle at the wholesale market between the farmer and the buyer. The buyer could be a representative of a warehouse, a businessman from Dhaka, or just a middleman. Once the price is settled after a heated bargaining, the mangoes are usually sent to a warehouse (arat) and thus they