

#NUTRITION

Nutritional benefits of jackfruit

Jackfruit is a summer delight in this part of the world. Packed with nutrition the raw fruit is eaten as a vegetable; it is consumed as a ripe fruit; used to make pithas and other sweet dishes. Many include jackfruit in their summer diet, while others detest the taste and the smell. Be that as it may, jackfruit remains one of the richest sources of vitamins, minerals, and fibres.

This exquisite summer fruit has more vitamins and minerals than apples, apricots, bananas, and avocados. The fruit is also important for its anti-carcinogenic, anti-microbial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, and hypoglycaemic properties.

The nutritional value of jackfruit varies according to the stage of ripening. The protein content of the seeds is also impressive and can vary up to 5.8 to 6.3 per cent. One cup of sliced raw jackfruit has 157 Calories, 2g of fat, 38g of carbohydrates, 3g of protein, and 40mg of calcium.

According to NIH (USA) every 100g of ripe flakes contains 287-323mg of potassium. It has essential amino acids like lysine, leucine, methionine, cystine, histidine, and tryptophan which are very important for the growth and development of the body.

The bright yellow colour comes from carotenoids, which are abundant in vitamin A. Carotenoid is also an antioxidant that is responsible for protecting cells from damage, and preventing degenerative diseases.

Only a few tropical fruits have a good amount of vitamin B, jackfruit being one of them. It contains good amounts of vitamin



B6, riboflavin, niacin, and folic acid. It also contains trace amounts of minerals like zinc, magnesium, and iron.

The antioxidant properties of jackfruit can delay cell damage influencing the anti-ageing process. The flesh has disease-fighting properties and the seeds have even more benefits. Jackfruit has a lot of free fat and contains zero 'bad cholesterol'. Hence it is a food that can be consumed regularly for optimal health benefits.

As jackfruit contains plenty of iron, its consumption can help prevent iron deficiency anaemia. It may also help to regulate blood circulation.

Copper is an important mineral that stimulates the production of the thyroxine hormone (T4) and prevents its over-absorption. It is necessarily essential

for thyroid gland metabolism. Jack fruit contains high amounts of copper, helping to maintain the overall health of the thyroid gland. The potassium content of jackfruit is important for lowering high blood pressure and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The texture and outlook of jackfruit indicate that it has a lot of dietary fibres, both soluble and insoluble. The soluble fibres are responsible for the hypoglycaemic effect and the insoluble fibres are good sources of prebiotics. They help not only to improve the gut microbiome but also reduce the risk of sore formation inside the stomach. Fibres in jackfruit help in regulating bowel

movement and ease constipation. Thus, jackfruit helps to reduce different diseases related to the GI tract including cancer, ulcerative colitis, and peptic ulcer.

As mentioned earlier, jackfruit has its benefit as a hypoglycaemic agent. For the same reason, the fruit can be beneficial for people suffering from diabetes who cannot consume summer fruits like mango and lychee for their high fructose contents.

Our skin is susceptible to sunburn, ageing, immune suppression, cancer, and oxidative damage due to our lifestyle choices, exposure to the sun, and ignorance. Sometimes proper diet and simple steps can reduce this damage. Jackfruit contains a good amount of vitamin A and vitamin C. Both of which are beneficial for skin health. Vitamin C can boost collagen production giving a boost to the quality, strength, structure, and overall health of the skin.

Despite having numerous health benefits those who have different pre-existing conditions and comorbidities such as uncontrolled diabetes mellitus and chronic kidney disease should always remain alert of their consumption of this otherwise beneficial fruit.

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