

Florida Food Fare

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Canistel

Description: The showiest member of the *Sapotaceae* family, Canistel is also called egg fruit because the pulp is often likened in texture to the yolk of a hard-boiled egg. The fruit, extremely variable in shape and size, may be nearly round, with or without a pointed apex, or may be oval, or spindle shaped. It is often bulged on one side and there is a 5-pointed calyx at the base that may be rounded or depressed. Length varies from 3 to 5 inches and width from 2 to 3 inches. Unripe fruit is green skinned, hard and gummy internally. When ripe, the skin turns yellow and is usually smooth and glossy. The flesh is yellow, firm and mealy. The flavor is similar to that of a sweet potato. Thought to originate in Belize, Guatemala, and Southern Mexico, where it grows wild, it came to Florida through the Bahamas.

Availability: The canistel needs a tropical or subtropical climate. In Florida, it survives winter temperatures as far north as Palm Beach and Punta Gorda and in protected areas up to St. Petersburg. It has the advantage of coming into season in late fall and winter when few other tropical fruits are available. The canistel generally matures from November or December to February or March in Florida. When left to ripen on the tree, the fruits will split at the stem end and

fall. A severe drop in temperature will also cause fruit to split and drop to the ground.

Nutritional Value: Canistels are rich in niacin and carotene and have a fair amount of ascorbic acid. 100 g. of edible fruit contains 138 calories, 2 g protein, .13 g. fat, .10 g fiber and 36.69 g carbohydrates. It also yields 26.5 mg calcium, 37.3 mg phosphorus, 32 mg carotene, 3.7 mg niacin and 58.1 mg vitamin C.

Selection and Care: Fruits are best clipped from the tree shortly before maturity. If kept at room temperature, the fruits will soften to eating ripe in 3 to 10 days. They should not be allowed to become too soft and mushy. Ripe fruit can be kept successfully in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator for several days.

Preparation and Use: The fruit can be enjoyed fresh or baked. It is used in a variety of desserts such as, custard, ice cream, milk shakes, and cupcakes. It can also be used to make pancakes, jams and marmalades. The canistel can also be dehydrated for longer storage.

Recipes:

Canistel Pie

1 1/3 cups mashed canistel	1 teaspoon lime juice
2/3 cup brown sugar	2 beaten eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 1/4 cups low-fat evaporated milk
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg	1-9 inch pie crust
1 teaspoon cinnamon	

Mix dry ingredients first, add remaining ingredients, except pie shell. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 450 degrees F for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 250 degrees F. and continue baking about 50 more minutes. Serve warm or chilled, with whipped cream.

Canistel Milkshake

Combine 1 cup ripe canistel pulp, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg, and low-fat milk in an electric blender to desired consistency.

Canistel Custard

3/4 cup ripe canistel mashed	2 eggs plus 2 egg whites
1/3 cup sugar	2 1/4 cups low-fat milk (scalded)
1 tablespoon lime juice	

Beat eggs lightly. Stir in sugar, fruit and lime juice. Add hot milk slowly while stirring. Pour into buttered custard cups. Set in pan of hot water about 1 inch deep. Bake at 350 degrees F about 30 to 40 minutes until custard is done.

Canistel and Sweet Potato Pudding

1 1/2 cups grated raw sweet potatoes	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/3 cup brown sugar	1/4 teaspoon cloves
1/4 cup honey	2 cups low-fat milk
2 eggs	2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup mashed canistel

Peel raw sweet potatoes and grate them finely. Combine eggs, sugar, honey, salt and spices. Heat milk and stir in grated sweet potatoes and butter. Cook just long enough to heat potatoes, add canistel. Combine the egg mixture and the canistel mixture. Mix well. Pour into an 8x8x2 inch baking pan. Bake 2 hours in a slow oven, 300 degrees F. Serve warm.