



Jicama

(Pronounced: hic-uh-mah)

Food \$ense (SNAP-Ed) Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

GaeLynn Peterson, USU Extension Assistant Professor
Shannon Cromwell, USU Extension Assistant Professor

Are you ready for a change in your vegetable menu? Give jicama a try! It's a delicious treat full of vitamin C and fiber and will add a crunch to your palate. When introduced to students in after-school programs, youth loved it and shared it with their families.

Description

Jicama is a crispy, sweet, mild, bulbous root vegetable that is light tan in color and shaped like a turnip. Jicama's flavor is similar to an apple or pear, but its texture more closely resembles a radish or turnip. Some jicama is grown in Texas and Florida, but it is typically grown in semitropical or tropical climates, such Mexico and Central and South America. Other names include yam bean, Mexican water chestnut, Mexican potato, and Mexican turnip (Ramos-de-la-Pena, Renard, Wicker, & Contreras-Esquivel, 2013; Stevenson, Jane, & Inglett, 2007).

Nutrition Highlights

Fresh, raw jicama (120 grams) provides 45 calories and approximately 40% RDA of vitamin C. Jicama is an excellent source of dietary fiber providing 24% RDA and less than 1% fat. Jicama also contains small amounts of vitamin B complex, vitamin E, and potassium. In addition, Jicama contains magnesium, copper, iron, manganese, and antioxidants. Jicama is 86-90% water (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016).



Jicama's low glycemic load makes it an excellent snack for diabetics and dieters, or anyone watching their blood sugar and insulin (Park & Han, 2015; Park, Lee, & Han, 2016).

Availability

Jicama is available year-round in most grocery stores, but spring and summer months provide large supplies of jicama that are shipped from Central America.

Eating

The most popular method of eating jicama is in raw form. After it is peeled, it can be cut into small cubes, sticks, or slices. It also can be shredded and

added to snacks, salads, and salsas. Jicama tends to absorb sauces without losing its crunch, making it an excellent addition to stir-fry and salsa. Jicama can also be cooked and is often combined with lime, lemon, cilantro, ginger and chili powder. The skin of jicama is inedible, so it must be peeled before eating (Neff, 2007).

Selecting

When shopping for jicama, choose medium-sized, firm roots. Larger jicama can be eaten, but tends to be dry, starchy, and less flavorful. Avoid roots with blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots (D'Sa, 2004).

Cleaning and Preparing

Wash jicama and remove the outer peel and the slightly papery layer just under the skin with a sharp paring knife or vegetable peeler. Cutting the jicama in half and then in half again, makes it easier to handle (Bender, 2016; D'Sa, 2004).

Storing

Store uncut jicama in a cool, dry place uncovered for up to 3 weeks (similar to potatoes). The ideal temperature is 55-59 degrees. Storing at lower temperatures or in a moist area may cause discoloration and decay. Once jicama is cut or sliced, refrigerate covered for up to 3 weeks (D'Sa, 2004).

Some ideas for enjoying jicama include:

- Serve on vegetable trays along with carrots, celery, and other raw vegetables.
- Combine with fresh berries and other fruits to make a fruit salad with a crunch.
- Use in stir-fry, salads, or slaws.
- French fry – baked or deep fried.
- Peel, chop, and boil jicama for about 15 minutes until softened. Drain, mash, and season with butter, salt, and pepper.
- Bake at 375° for 45 minutes and top with sour cream and butter and sprinkle with fresh herbs, chili powder, or chopped chives.
- Mix shredded or finely diced jicama with pineapple and avocado to make a yummy salsa.
- Add to soups and stews.

Recipes:

Jicama Fruit Salad

Makes 7 servings

Ingredients:

3 cups jicama, sliced (small)
2 cups watermelon (cut into pieces)
1 mango (chunked)
1 papaya (small)
2 kiwi (sliced)
1 cup fresh or canned pineapple chunks
1 tsp. lime or orange juice
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. chili powder

Directions: Wash, peel, and cut the jicama into thin slices. Wash, peel, and cut the rest of the fruit into slices or medium sized pieces. Combine the fruit and jicama in a bowl. Sprinkle the lime or orange juice over the fruit. In a small bowl, mix the salt and chili powder. Sprinkle over the fruit and serve. *(Adapted from whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)*

Jicama Fries

Makes 4 – 6 servings

Ingredients:

1 lb jicama, peeled
1 tbsp. vegetable or coconut oil
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. paprika
ground black pepper

Directions: Slice peeled jicama into thin match stick shaped fries. Combine sliced jicama with coconut oil and spices. Toss well to combine. Evenly spread the fries on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. *(Adapted from thehealthyadvocate.com)*

Jicama and Pineapple Salsa

Ingredients:

1 jicama peeled and diced
2 tomatoes diced (or 1 can diced tomatoes)
1 fresh pineapple cored and diced (or 1 can pineapple tidbits)
1 can black beans (optional)
1 avocado diced
½ bunch cilantro chopped
1 bunch green onions chopped
½ tsp garlic
juice of 2 lemons
½ cup honey
1 tsp salt

Directions: Mix all ingredients and chill before serving. (Adapted from tasytkitchen.com)

<https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/jicama.pdf>.

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