

## Amazon Fruits - Taste the Flavor of South America

If you have the opportunity to travel to the Amazon region of South America, you must take advantage of the exotic, amazing cuisine indigenous to the area. Amazon fruits, in particular, are especially delicious when served fresh or incorporated in a variety of meals and desserts. If you thought these tropical areas were all bananas and mangoes, you will be pleasantly surprised. Many of these fruits are available only in South America, unless one can find imports at specialty shops. Before you go shopping, however, be sure to know which fruit is which, how they are served and how you can enjoy them. Here is just a small sampling of what awaits you in the glorious Amazon region:

**Pupunha:** this is a small, conical shaped fruit that ranges from yellow to reddish orange in color. Pupunha grows on tall palm trees and contains a single, large seed within its edible pulp - very much like a peach. This fruit is rich in Vitamins A and C, and may be cooked or eaten raw.

**Tucumã:** on the outset, this fruit may resemble a persimmon in size and color, which varies from yellow to dark red-orange. Like persimmons, the fruit's flesh is thin, but the flavor is quite unique. Tucumã contains a great amount of Vitamin A, more than the average avocado.

**Pitomba:** this tangy fruit is popular in area farmer's markets and known for its golden pulp and tart flavor. Pitomba is traditionally used to make jams and jellies, and the flavor is also used in popular soft drinks in the region.

**Cupuaçu:** this fruit bears a similar look to the kiwi with its brown, fuzzy exterior, but in actuality it is closer to cacao in flavor. In fact, cupuaçu is often used as a substitute for cocoa in local recipes. Cupuaçu is used primarily in dessert and other sweet items.

**Açaí:** this may be the best known of the Amazon region fruits, as there is a visibility for acai in America. Açaí is a small, purple berry found on rainforest palm trees, and the pulp and juice are used for a variety of purposes. Look around Brazil and you will find Açaí juice drinks, soft drinks, protein bars, candy and entrees topped with the pulp. It is not recommended to eat the berries straight from the tree, but when enjoyed Açaí provides the body with vitamins and antioxidants. From the healthful properties of Açaí to the sweetness of Cupuaçu, South America offers visitors an array of exotic fruits to enjoy. Try some on your next trip.

## About the Author

Corby Kummer, food editor for The Atlantic Monthly Magazine and Atlantic Unbound, discusses the culinary arts, reviews new cookbooks, and reveals.

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