



Contact: Emily Ingle
Fleishman-Hillard
[512]-495-7172
emily.ingle@fleishman.com

WINTER IS IN THE AIR - FRESH MANGOS ARE IN THE PRODUCE AISLE

*National Mango Board seeks to educate consumers about the fruit
and its culinary uses*

Orlando, FL (November 13, 2006) – Nothing exudes a taste of the tropics like mangos, and thankfully, you can continue to bring the sweet taste of sunshine to your home even in the gloom of winter. Contrary to popular belief, the mango is available any time of year and The National Mango Board (NMB) has made it its mission to educate U.S. consumers on selection and preparation of the world’s most consumed fruit. Since 1995, mango consumption has increased by 100 percent in the U.S.* However, approximately only 30 percent of U.S. households consume mangos today.

There are six major varieties of mangos available in the U.S. at overlapping seasons throughout the year. They vary in size, shape, and color, but the flavors are fairly consistent. Don’t be fooled by the fruit’s skin color; it has little to do with its ripeness. Regardless of external color, the flesh of any mango variety promises to be juicy and flavorful at the point-of-sale.

Not surprisingly, mangos are also naturally good for you. The mango is an excellent source of vitamins A and C, and a good source of fiber. They have a variety of antioxidants including beta carotene which is responsible for the mango’s brightly colored flesh.

“Formed in early 2006, the board’s objective is to educate consumers about the mango and its many uses,” says William Watson, Executive Director of the NMB. “Though mangos have become more popular in the U.S., our research shows that consumers are more likely to purchase mangos if they know how to select, store, ripen, cut, and use mangos.” In response, the NMB offers the following suggestions:

*USDA Outlook Report 2004

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Selecting Mangos

- Color is not a determining factor of a mango's ripeness. The best way to determine if the fruit is ripe is to squeeze it gently. The mango should give slightly, but not be too soft.
- It should have a sweet, fruity scent. If there is no scent, there will probably be less flavor.

Ripening and Storing Mangos

- When ripening, mangos should be stored on the counter at room temperature. They will continue to ripen becoming sweeter and softer.
- To ripen faster, place mangos in a paper bag with bananas or apples.
- Ripe mangos should be stored in the refrigerator, as cold storage slows down the ripening. Store ripe mangos for up to five days in the refrigerator wrapped in a plastic bag.
- Frozen mango may be peeled, cubed and stored in an airtight container for up to six months.

Cutting Mangos

- A mango has one seed in the center of the fruit.
- Cutting off the sides: place the mango with one of its narrower sides facing up. Starting ¼ inch from the stem, slide along each side of the pit to cut off the "cheeks." Peel skin from cheeks and slice or dice as needed. (See photos on separate sheet.)
- For a decorative cut, cut the cheeks as noted above. With the skin side of the cheeks on a cutting board, cut the flesh crisscross being careful not to cut through the skin. Press the skin so the fruit cubes pop outward. With a spoon or knife, scrape off the mango cubes.
- Several mango splitters are now available at specialty stores.

Usage Ideas for Mangos

- Fresh mangos are most frequently eaten plain, either whole or sliced. Some enhance the flavor of the mango with salt or lime juice and chili pepper.
- Mangos have tenderizing properties, making them a perfect ingredient for marinades.
- Mangos complement coconut, pineapple, raspberries, chicken, and pork.

Visit the NMB's web site, www.mangoinfo.org for additional facts and recipes.

About National Mango Board

The National Mango Board is a national promotion and research organization supported by production assessments from both domestic and imported mangos. Per-capita consumption of mangos nearly tripled since 1992 reaching 1.9 pounds in 2005. Official figures for 2006 have yet to be released, but the year's record crop is expected to push per-capita figures above 2.0 pounds. Mango imports to the United States in 2006 reached 638 million pounds. The board was designed to drive awareness and consumption of fresh mangos in the U.S. Mangos are an excellent source of vitamins A and C and a good source of fiber.

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