

# Papaya

\* Unripe, green papaya fruit and the leaves of the papaya tree contain an enzyme called papain. Papain has been used as a natural meat tenderizer for thousands of years and today is an ingredient in many commercial meat tenderizers.

\* The seeds of the fruit resemble peppercorns and are edible. They can be ground up and used as a substitute for black pepper.

\* Papaya leaves are steamed and eaten in parts of Asia.

\* The bark of the papaya tree is often used to make rope.

\* Ripe papaya is usually eaten raw. Unripe papaya can be eaten if cooked and is used in many sauces and dishes around the world.

\* As with eating too many carrots, eating too much papaya can cause carotenemia, the yellowing of the soles of the feet and the palms. It is temporary and goes away once excessive amounts of papaya are no longer being eaten.

\* When buying papayas, look for ones that are mostly or completely yellow and give slightly to pressure. Green, hard papayas are unripe and will never ripen properly.

\* A small papaya contains about 300% of the recommended daily amount of Vitamin C.

