

TROPICAL AND EXOTIC FRUIT Guide

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MELBOURNE MARKETS



Abiu
Pouteria caimito
Other Names Caimito, yellow star apple
Availability July to October
November to February

Abiu is a round, yellow-skinned fruit with translucent, caramel-flavoured flesh. To eat, scoop out the flesh taking care to remove the seeds and discard the skin. Delicious pureed for drinks and desserts. Choose brightly coloured, blemish-free fruit. Ripen at room temperature away from light for best results. Unripe fruits contain a 'gummy' latex.



Avocado-Fuerte
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability March to November

The Fuerte avocado has dark green, glossy skin with pale raised spots. It is buttery in texture with a good flavour and has a medium-sized stone.



Avocado-Hass
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability All year round

The Hass is one of the most popular varieties. It is smallish with a pebbly skin, which ripens to a purple/black colour. It contains a small stone and has dense, nutty, fibre free flesh. Keeps well.



Avocado-Hazzard
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability July and August

The Hazzard is a large elongated fruit with smooth olive green skin. The flesh is creamy and of excellent quality. The skin retains its colour and the tip should yield slightly when ripe.



Avocado-Reed
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability August to December

A large, round fruit with a loose peel. It retains a firm texture even when ripe and is therefore ideal for salads but not a good choice for mashing into dips or guacamole.

Avocado
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear

Oval, green to black-skinned fruit roughly the size and shape of a pear avocados contain hard, green flesh around a single stone. The flesh ripens to a buttery texture with a rich, nutty flavour. Avocados can be eaten alone, used in salads and sandwiches or pureed for smoothies and ice cream. Mexican varieties have aniseed-scented leaves that are used in cooking and avocado oil is used in cosmetics and as a cooking oil.



Avocado-Sharwill
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability May to July

The Sharwill avocado has a rough green skin similar to the Fuerte. The medium-sized, oval fruit has a rich, creamy flavour and a small seed. Ideal for guacamole when ripe.



Avocado-Wurtz
Persea americana
Other Names Avocado pear, alligator pear
Availability June to December

The Wurtz avocado is pear-shaped, with a thin, smooth, shiny skin and a small seed. It also has a good, consistent flavour.



Avocado-Cocktail
Persea americana
Other Names Avocaditos, avocado fingers
Availability All year round (limited)

A cocktail-sized avocado that is about the size and shape of a small cucumber. The seed is unformed in this variety and in its place is a hollow, papery sheath. The fruit is slightly curved with a smooth, dark olive green skin and creamy, fine-flavoured flesh. Ideal for individual serves.



Banana-Cavendish
Musa spp.
Availability All year round

The Cavendish is the most common banana in Australia. It is ideal for eating when ripe and lends itself well to cooking or drying. Select fruit that is bright yellow. Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate Cavendish bananas as the skin will blacken.



Banana-Ducasse
Musa spp.
Availability All year round

Known in Australia as the sugar banana, Ducasse is the most important banana in Thailand and is used for eating and cooking. Select fruit that is bright, yellow-green in colour and heavy for its size. When ripe it should yield to gentle pressure. Store at room temperature. Ducasse bananas do not blacken as easily as other varieties when refrigerated. The blossoms of this variety are sold as a vegetable.

**Banana-Gold Finger***Musa spp.*

Availability All year round

The Gold Finger is a short banana with bright, yellow skin and creamy-yellow flesh. It has a slightly tart flavour and does not brown when cut. Select bright, yellow fruit with a pleasant aroma. Store at room temperature. It has a shelf life two to three days longer than other varieties. Do not refrigerate, as the skin will blacken.

**Banana-Plantain***Musa spp.*

Availability All year round

Plantain is the name given to large bananas, which are edible only when cooked. They are firm, mild tasting and contain less sugar and more starch, than eating varieties. Often used in Caribbean and Mexican cooking, they can be sautéed, fried, mashed, stewed, or braised. Edible in all stages of ripeness, they increase in sweetness as they ripen.

**Banana-Red Dacca***Musa spp.*

Availability All year round

The Red Dacca is a large, cooking banana with a thick, purple-red skin and starchy, cream to light pink flesh. Ideal for fruit compotes, and baking. Select fruit that is bright red. Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate, as the skin will blacken.

**Banana-Wax tip Eco Banana***Musa spp.*

Availability All year round

Bananas grown organically with minimal fertiliser and no pesticides. They are dipped in a bright red, blue and/or green food-grade wax at the time of packing to brand them as eco-friendly. The flesh is moist, firm and sweet. Select fruit that is bright yellow. Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate, as the skin will blacken.

**Bell Fruit***Syzygium sp.*

Other Names Rose apple, jambu

Availability September to February

This bell-shaped fruit native to South East Asia has a thin, glossy skin varying in colour from pale-green and pink to red. The crisp, juicy flesh is mildly aromatic. Its subtle flavour can be enhanced with lemon or lime juice and it is often mixed with other fruits in salads. Choose firm, blemish-free fruit that is heavy for its size.

**Breadfruit***Artocarpus altilis*

Other Names Hawaiian ulu

Availability March to July

Thought to be native to Indonesia. Voyagers brought the breadfruit to Polynesia where it has become an essential food source. The ripe fruit is soft with sweet smelling, creamy-yellow flesh. Breadfruit can be cooked in the same way as potatoes—as mash or chips and can even be used to make breads and puddings. Choose firm, blemish-free fruit. They may be stored up to a week in the refrigerator.

**Buddha's Hand Citron***Citrus medica var. sarcocodactylus*

Other Names Fingered citron

Availability June to October

Buddha's Hand is a variety of the citron—one of the most ancient of the citrus family. Ripe fruits have extremely fragrant, thick, yellow rind, and contain no pulp. It is mainly used to perfume a room or clothing and for devotional purposes. It can be candied or pressed to extract oil, which is used in confectionery or cosmetics. Choose bright, sound fruit, which will keep for about two weeks at room temperature and exude a pleasant aroma.

**Carambola***Averrhoa carambola*

Other Names Star fruit, five corners

Availability All year round, peaking December to September

The Carambola is a long, greenish-yellow fruit with five ridges, which, when cut reveal an attractive star-shaped cross section. The Vietnamese favour the sour varieties for inclusion in their 'table salads' whereas the sweet varieties are most often eaten fresh, sliced as a component in fruit salads, used as a garnish or juiced.

**Coconut***Cocos nucifera*

Availability All year round

The fruit of the coconut palm, coconuts are available green or ripe. The green coconuts contain a large quantity of refreshing juice and jelly-like meat, which is considered a delicacy in South East Asia. Ripe coconuts have hard, fibre-covered brown shells which must be cracked to reveal oily, white flesh and a hollow interior containing milky juice. Coconut flesh has many uses. It can be eaten fresh, dried for use in cooking, grated and squeezed with water to provide coconut milk.

**Cumquat***Fortunella spp.*

Availability February to June

Not a true citrus, the cumquat, resembles a miniature orange and can be oval or round, seeded or seedless. It may be eaten whole, even though quite sour, or added to cooked dishes. Most commonly, it is preserved in syrup or used to make marmalade. Cumquats can be crushed in a glass, skin and all and topped up with soda for a refreshing drink. Choose bright, glossy, firm fruit.

**Custard Apple-Pink's Mammoth***Annona atemoya*

Availability March to September, peaking May

A native of South America, the Custard Apple is harvested green and allowed to ripen at room temperature. It's ready to eat when soft and easily pulled apart with the fingers. Possibly the best flavoured of the custard apples, Pink's Mammoth bears fruit of large and irregular shape. The succulent flesh has few seeds but can be gritty close to the skin.

**Dragon Fruit***Hylocereus undatus*

Other Names Pitahaya,

strawberry pear

Availability All year round, peaking May to September

Native to Central and South America the Dragon fruit is a colourful, edible cactus, pink to red with prominent, green-edged scales. The thin skin encloses dense white or red flesh with tiny, edible black seeds. A squeeze of lemon or lime juice enhances its delicate, sweet flavour. The flesh can be eaten with a spoon or pureed for use in drinks. Choose fruit that is bright in colour and gives slightly when gently pressed.

**Durian***Durio zibethinus*

Availability December to February

Native to the rain forests of South East Asia, the Durian tree bears large, heavy fruit with a green-yellow skin and sharp, woody spikes. It is split open to reveal chestnut-like seeds surrounded by rich, creamy-yellow, custard-like flesh totally free of acidity.

An acquired taste, it is notorious for its pervasive, pungent odour and is banned from public buildings in South East Asia for this reason.

**Feijoa***Feijoa sellowiana*

Other Names Pineapple guava,

guavasteen

Availability March to August

The Feijoa is a small, oval fruit native to South America. Its waxy skin is rough and dull green. It has a highly perfumed, sweet granular pulp with acid tones and a tropical flavour. The whole fruit can be eaten fresh, stewed or juiced for drinks or sorbets.

**Grapefruit-Ruby Blush***Citrus paradisi*

Availability All year round

The flesh of the Ruby Blush is juicy and more tart than that of white grapefruit. It can be segmented and eaten fresh or juiced. Its pink to red flesh is an attractive addition to salads and it is also used to make a delicious sorbet. Choose glossy fruit that feels heavy for its size and has good blush colour on the skin. Pink-fleshed grapefruit contain lycopene, which is reputed to have a protective effect against cancer.

**Guava***Psidium guajava***Availability** All year round, peaking February to May

There are many varieties of this aromatic fruit, a native of the warm regions of Central America. They range from round to pear-shaped and largest variety is the round, green Thai White, which is eaten when unripe and crisp or pickled in brine. Other varieties have yellow to green skin with white to pink flesh and edible seeds. The edible skin is high in Vitamin C. Ripe guavas can be eaten fresh or poached in syrup, pureed for ice cream and sorbets, made into jam or juiced. They are also made into a dense fruit paste to serve with cheese.

**Jaboticaba***Myrciaria cauliflora***Availability** March and August to December

Originating in Brazil, the Jaboticaba is a round, purple fruit the size of a large grape with smooth, glossy, tough skin. The white or rose-coloured flesh is translucent, gelatinous and juicy. It has a spicy, slightly acidic, grape-like flavour. It is eaten fresh or can be used to make cakes, preserves or even fermented to make wine. Choose fruit that is free from blemishes and heavy for its size.

**Jackfruit***Artocarpus heterophyllous***Availability** All year round, peaking January to May

The largest tree-borne fruit and native to Southern India, this fruit has tough yellow-green skin with hexagonal, spiky scales. The starchy, green fruit can be cooked, dried or pickled. The ripe fruit is removed in triangular sections, each containing a large seed. It has a strong, tropical odour and a flavour similar to banana mixed with pineapple. It is eaten fresh and many jackfruit products such as jackfruit chips, candy, drinks and ice creams can be found in Asian stores. The seeds can be boiled or roasted.

**Lime-Kaffir***Citrus hystrix***Other Names** Makrut
Availability All year round, peaking June to September

A highly aromatic member of the citrus family, the Kaffir lime has glossy double leaves and bumpy, dark-green fruit. The grated rind of fruit is used in most Thai curry pastes. The finely shredded leaves add their exquisite fragrance to salads, soups and curries. Both the leaves and fruit can be frozen in a tightly sealed container. It is most often known by its Thai name, Makrut, as kaffir is a derogatory term for unbeliever in Arabic.

**Lime-Tahitian***Citrus latifolia***Other Names** Persian lime
Availability All year round, peaking June to September

The fruit is oval, usually rounded at the base. The peel is smooth and vivid-green until ripe when it becomes pale-yellow and the pulp is light green-yellow when ripe. It is used extensively in Thai cuisine and in alcoholic drinks. Choose limes that are free from blemishes, firm and heavy for their size.

**Lime-West Indian***Citrus aurantifolia***Other Names** Mexican lime, West Indian lime, key lime
Availability All year round, peaking June to September

The small fruit is round, sometimes with a nipple at the apex. The peel is green and glossy when unripe, pale yellow when ripe and is generally smooth. The pulp is green-yellow, aromatic, juicy, acidic and full of flavour. West Indian Limes complement fish dishes and are the main ingredient in Key Lime Pie. Choose limes that are free from blemishes, firm and heavy for their size.

**Longan***Euphoria longan***Other Names** Dragon's eye
Availability October to March, peaking November to February

Popular in China where it originated, the longan bears clusters of fruit the size of a large grape. The thin, brittle, yellow-brown skin encloses translucent, white pulp surrounding a single, dark seed, hence the name 'Dragon's Eye'. The flesh is whitish, translucent with a musky, sweet flavour. It is eaten fresh and can also be found dried.

**Lychee***Litchi chinensis***Other Names** Litchi nut
Availability November to February

Native to Southern China, the lychee tree produces clusters of small, oval or heart-shaped fruit with pink to red, leathery skin enclosing aromatic, translucent white to pink flesh around a single stone. Small-stoned varieties are the most desirable. Lychees can be stored in the refrigerator. The skin will toughen and turn brown in a few days without affecting the flavour of the flesh. Lychees are best eaten fresh but are also available canned and dried. Choose fruits that are bright in colour.

**Mango***Mangifera indica***Availability** October to March

Native to southern Asia, there are many varieties most having green, red or yellow skin around smooth-textured, yellow-orange flesh with a central flat stone. To eat, make two parallel cuts on either side of the stone and either scoop the flesh from the halves or score the flesh and turn the 'cheeks' inside-out to serve.

**Mango-Kensington Pride***Mangifera indica***Availability** October to April

The most popular variety cultivated in Australia and originally known as the Bowen, this mango has succulent, silky flesh with sweet flavour balanced by just the right amount of acidity. Choose unblemished fruit that yield to gentle pressure.

**Mangosteen-Purple***Garcinia mangostana***Availability** January to April

An exotic, round fruit with thick, dark-purple skin containing five to seven segments of translucent flesh with an exotic, fruit salad flavour. One of the segments contains a stone. Best eaten fresh this is reputedly the most delicious of all tropical fruits. Choose dark, unblemished fruit that yields slightly to gentle pressure.

**Melon-Honeydew***Cucumis melo l. inodorus***Availability** All year round, peaking November to December

There are several types of honeydew melon-white/cream skin with green flesh, yellow skin with white flesh and yellow skin with green flesh. Choose fruit that is glossy, heavy for its size, fragrant and sounds hollow when tapped. Under-ripe melons can be ripened at room temperature. Wrap ripe melons in a plastic bag and refrigerate up to 5 days.

**Melon-Rockmelon***Cucumis melo***Other Names** Cantaloupe, muskmelon
Availability All year round

The Rockmelon, introduced to the new world by Columbus, is round with a creamy, netted skin. The flesh is yellow-orange, smooth-textured, sweet and aromatic. Usually eaten fresh, it is a traditional Italian accompaniment to prosciutto and the French love to serve it chilled with port. Choose sound fruit without soft spots or bruises. The fruit should have a distinct perfume, sound hollow when tapped and yield slightly at the stem end.

**Melon-Watermelon***Citrullus vulgaris***Availability** All year round

A native of Africa, there are now many cultivars of Watermelon available from small and round, to long and large with dark green, sometimes striped skin. The flesh is grainy, sweet and very juicy and varies from pink to red and golden-yellow. Black seeds are the norm but there are also seedless varieties. It is usually sliced and eaten chilled or cubed and added to fruit salads. It can be pureed for drinks or sorbets. The rind can be pickled as a relish. Choose fruit that is heavy for its size, glossy and sounds hollow when tapped. Under-ripe melons can be ripened at room temperature. Wrap ripe melons in a plastic bag and refrigerate up to 5 days.

**Papaya***Carica papaya***Other Names** Pawpaw
Availability All year round, peaking April to September

There are different varieties of this tropical fruit. Fruits tend to be very fleshy, with an inside cavity containing bitter, round, gelatinous seeds. The small, red fleshed variety is particularly sweet and eaten ripe as a fruit, sometimes with a squeeze of lime juice. The large, torpedo-shaped variety is used unripe with its flesh cut into long shreds and seasoned as a salad vegetable. When ripe, its flesh is yellow and edible as a fruit although it has a slightly unpleasant smell and is best served with sugar and lemon juice.

**Passionfruit–Purple***Passiflora edulis forma edulis***Availability** All year round

The Passionfruit is the fruit of a South American vine. The most common variety is the purple passionfruit, which has wrinkled purple skin and sweet, sour pulp. Its pulp varies in colour from bright yellow to orange and it has many small, hard, black seeds. The flavour is refreshing and tangy. It can be cut in half and eaten spooned from the shell or used to flavour stewed fruits, creams and toppings—especially popular on Pavlova.

Choose fruit that is dark, lightly wrinkled and heavy for its size.

**Persimmon***Diospyros kaki***Other Names** Sharon fruit**Availability** February to July

Native to China, the Persimmon is an attractive, perfumed fruit with bright orange, shiny skin and fragrant flesh surrounding several stones. There are two main types of persimmon, astringent and non-astringent. The astringent type must be eaten when very ripe and soft whereas the other can be eaten when crisp. Ripe persimmon flesh can be incorporated into cakes and desserts. Choose fruit that is smooth and bright.

**Pineapple–Rough Leaf***Ananas Comosus***Availability** All year round, peaking October to March

The Rough Leaf is smaller than the Smooth Leaf Pineapple, with a tough, waxy rind that is a dark, green-yellow to orange-yellow when the fruit is ripe. The leaves are broad with a serrated edge while the flesh varies from white to yellow and is sweeter and drier than other varieties. Eaten fresh, it is also used in cakes, salads, desserts and beverages.

**Pomegranate***Punica granatum***Availability** February to May

An ancient, Mediterranean fruit with durable, leathery skin ranging from yellow to pink and red. The interior is composed of transparent sacs filled with plump, juicy, red, pink or white seeds. To peel, carefully cut off the top and bottom and segment the skin, trying not to cut through the seeds, releasing juice which will stain. Shake out the seeds and eat fresh, add to sweet and savoury salads or juice for use in cooking. Pomegranate juice is the key ingredient in Grenadine cordial. Choose fruit that is large, heavy for its size, smooth and well-coloured.

**Pomelo***Citrus maxima***Other Names** Pummelo, shaddock, Chinese grapefruit.**Availability** March to November, peaking June to July

The largest of the citrus family, the pomelo bears large, round to heart-shaped fruit usually green to pale-yellow in colour. The thick skin is dotted with tiny, green or pink glands, which are an indication of the internal colour. The segmented flesh varies from pale-yellow to pink-red surrounded by tough membrane, which should be removed. Individual fruit vary from very juicy to fairly dry with a mildly sweet to tart flavour and a hint of bitterness. Eat fresh or add to salads.

**Rambutan***Nephelium lappaceum***Availability** March to November, peaking June to July

Native to the Malaysian lowlands, varieties of Rambutan range in colour from red to yellow.

The thin, leathery rind is covered with soft, thick, hair-like spines. The flesh is translucent and sweet, firmer and dryer than that of the lychee and contains a single seed. It is best eaten fresh. Choose fruit that is large, unblemished and brightly coloured with stiff hairs. Keep refrigerated.

**Rollinia***Rollinia deliciosa***Other Names** South American custard apple, biriba, countess' fruit**Availability** February to March July to September

Native to Brazil, this tropical relative of the custard apple has a yellowish, heart-shape fruit with pronounced scales similar to the cherimoya. It has acidic, creamy flesh reputedly reminiscent of lemon meringue pie.

**Sapodilla***Manilkara zapota***Availability** All year round, peaking May to March

This round to egg-shaped fruit is hard when immature, with smooth, sandy-brown skin. As it ripens the skin wrinkles and the flesh becomes very sweet. The flesh varies in colour from yellow to dark-brown and it may be grainy or smooth depending on the variety. The sapodilla tree is also the source of chicle, a latex used to make chewing gum. Best eaten fresh. Choose fruit that is unblemished, plump and yields slightly to gentle pressure.

**Sapote–Black***Diaspyros digyna***Other Names** Chocolate pudding fruit, caca-poule, kaki noir, black persimmon**Availability** May to January, peaking May to October

The Black Sapote is believed to have originated in Mexico. When ripe the smooth, thin skin becomes olive-green. The jelly-like flesh is glossy, brown-black and sweet and mild in flavour. Its high moisture content makes it ideal to use in cakes, muffins, mousses and trifles. Choose fruit with soft, dark olive-green skin.

**Sapote–Mamey***Pouteria sapota***Availability** July to September

Of Mexican origin, this fruit has a dark brown, rough rind enclosing soft, sweet salmon coloured flesh. Usually eaten with a spoon directly from the shell, it can also be made into sorbets or jam. Choose fruit that has a sweet aroma and is heavy for its size.

**Soursop***Annona muricata***Other Names** Guanabana, graviola**Availability** April to December, peaking September

A tropical fruit native to Central America, the Soursop has leathery, green skin covered with short, soft spines. It has fragrant, acid flesh which can be fibrous in some varieties and numerous black seeds. The fruit can be eaten fresh, but is best pureed and strained to make refreshing drinks or sorbets. Choose unblemished fruit that is heavy for its size, and that yields slightly when pressed.

**Star Apple***Chrysophyllum cainito***Availability** May and November, peaking June to October

Round, apple-sized fruits that when cut, reveal flesh with a central star pattern. There are two main varieties of Star Apple—the purple-skinned variety with red-purple pulp and the green-skinned variety with whitish pulp. They are best eaten fresh with the pulp spooned out to avoid the bitter, inside skin. They can also be made into preserves.

**Tamarillo***Cyphomandra betacea***Other Names** Tree tomato, false tomato**Availability** All year round

Fruit of a subtropical South American shrub, this egg-shaped fruit ranges in colour from yellow-red to purple with soft, tart flesh set around internal pockets of seeds, similar to a tomato. Tamarillos can be eaten fresh but are best stewed with sugar or candied. They can also be used in savoury dishes or made into chutneys or sauces. Choose fruit that is firm and heavy for its size.

**Tangelo***Citrus paradisi, Citrus reticulata***Availability** June to September

A hybrid of the mandarin and grapefruit or pomelo, the Tangelo is a bright, tangerine-coloured fruit with the loose skin of its mandarin parent and a pronounced bump or neck at the stem end. The fruit is sweet with a slight acidity and very juicy.

**Youngberries***Rubus ursinus* vars.**Availability** September to January

Youngberries originated in Australia and look similar to blackberries. They are an excellent source of vitamin c, folate and dietary fibre. Use fresh with ice cream, in fruit salads and as toppings on cakes and pavlovas. Keep refrigerated at 2–4 degrees and keep for no longer than 4 days. Look for bright, plump fruit with deep, rich colours.