

Assam Gelugor

Garcinia atrovirdis



Common names	Asam gelugor, asam keping (Malay), som haek, sommawon (Thai), <i>Garcinia</i> .
Origin	Dried sliced fruit from a large rainforest tree native to peninsular Malaysia that belongs to Clusiaceae family.
Description	Often called sliced tamarind or tamarind skin but it is not tamarind but dried slices of the asam gelugor fruit related to the mangosteen which looks like a miniature pumpkin with glossy skin.
Growth Habitat	The trees grow wild throughout peninsular Malaysia but they are also widely cultivated, especially in the northern part of Malaysia because of its economic and medicinal value. They are also found in the southern region of Thailand.
Foliage	The tree grows to a height of 20m or higher. It has a long trunk, smooth grey bark and drooping branches. The leaves are dark green, shiny, long and narrow with a pointed tip and upturned edges.
Flowers	The female flowers are dark red in color.

Fruits	The fruits look like brilliant orange yellow miniature pumpkins.
Soil	This tree needs tropical or sub-tropical conditions. It can survive well even in marginal soils such as peat but grows best in well-drained loam and mineral soils.
Fertilization	Three types of fertilizers are recommended: chicken dung, NPK(15:15:15) and NPKMg(12:12:17:2). Chicken dung at the rate of 15kg/tree, once a year for the first 3 years. NPK 100g/tree, every 3 months. NPKMg 300g/tree every 4 months after the fourth year.
Propagation	Asam Gelugor or Som-khaek is commonly propagated by germinating seeds but such seems to have resulted in more male than female trees. Thus, it is suggested that grafting or inarching bud wood of known sex onto seedling trees may produce plants of desired sex which can bear fruits within 4-5 years of grafting.
Harvest	Trees produce fruit after 5 to 6 years. It takes 100 to 120 days from flower to mature fruit. Poles are used for harvesting. Fruits are sliced and sun-dried for 2 to 3 days.
Nutritional Properties	The fruit contains fruiting acids such as citric acid, tartaric acid, malic acid and ascorbic acid that have antioxidant activities. Asam gelugor also contain beneficial flavonoids.
Health Benefits	The asam gelugor or asam keeping demand had now increased mainly due to its cholesterol lowering as well as slimming effects.
Commercial Uses	The dried fruit is used for improving blood circulation, as an expectorant, treatment of coughs and as a laxative. Now it is believed that the fruit extract is beneficial for reducing cholesterol and enlarging the blood vessels, absorbing excess fat and for use in diets. Usually used as a souring ingredient in curries and soup.

Food Suggestion

Laksa Kelantan

Ingredients

Serves: 6

- 600g of mackerel
- 20 shallots
- 2.5cm fresh ginger
- 2 pieces asam keping (dried tamarind slices)
- 1 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 2 cups (500ml) thick coconut milk
- 6 cups (1.5l) water
- 500g thick rice noodles (laksa noodles)
- salt to taste
- **Garnish:**
- 1 cucumber, cut in matchstick slices
- 2 long chinese beans, sliced finely
- 150g beansprouts, blanched
- 6 small limes, halved
- Sambal Belacan, to taste

Preparation method

Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 20 mins Ready: 40 mins

1. Simmer the cleaned whole fish in a pot of water until cooked. Remove fish and let cool before separating the flesh from the bone. Mince the flesh. Strain the stock.
2. Blend the shallots and ginger together until liquidized. Add to the stock with asam keping and heat.
3. Once the soup base is boiling, add in the minced fish and coconut milk making sure to stir frequently to prevent curdling. Turn down the heat and simmer for another 20 minutes or until the soup thickens. Salt to taste
4. Blanch the laksa noodles in boiling water, drain and set

	<p>aside. Serve the laksa noodles in a bowl, ladle some sauce on top and add garnish. For a different variation called laksam. The noodles used would be a wide flat rice noodle instead of the round laksa noodles.</p>
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