

Cashew Nut

Anacardium occidentale



Common names	Casa, Maranon, Merey (Spanish), Noix d'anacarde, Pomme de caju (French), Caju (Portuguese), Kaju (Hind))
Origin	While native to Northern South America, the Portuguese took the cashew plant to Goa, India, between the years of 1560 and 1565. From there it spread throughout Southeast Asia and eventually Africa.
Description	Cashew is a bean shaped nut that grows on a tropical evergreen tree. The cashew tree is related to poison ivy and the shell of the cashew nuts contains an irritating poison. Even the so-called "raw" cashews have actually been roasted to remove all the poison/toxic resin from the nuts.
Growth Habitat	The cashew tree will tolerate a wide range of conditions including drought and poor soil, but cannot withstand cold or frost. In East Africa it grows between sea level and 1000m in areas of 500mm rainfall or more.
Foliage	The tree is small and evergreen, growing to 10-12m (~32 ft) tall, with a short, often irregularly shaped trunk. The leaves are spirally arranged, leathery, 4 to 22 cm long and 2 to 15 cm broad.

Flowers	The flowers are produced in a panicle or corymb up to 26 cm long, each flower is small, pale green at first then turning reddish, with five slender, acute petals 7 to 15 mm long.
Fruits	The cashew nut grows first and then the cashew apple grows above the nut stalk so the cashew apple is not a true fruit. The apple enlarges just two weeks before fruit fall. The cashew apple can be bright orange, red or yellow and its juice is sweet.
Soil	The cashew is a strong plant that is renowned for growing in soils, especially sandy soils that are generally unsuitable for other fruit trees. For the best production deep, well-drained sandy or sandy-loam soil is recommended. Cashew trees will not grow in poorly-drained soils.
Pruning	Formative pruning during the first 2 years can encourage lateral branching and growth. Remove 1-2 inches from all shoot tips during spring and summer for the first two years after planting. After a few years, it is desirable to cut back the tops of the trees to 10 to 12 feet (3.1 to 3.7 m). Pruning should be done soon after harvest.
Fertilization	The application of nitrogen and phosphate are important. Approximately 75 g LAN and 200 g superphosphate per year age of the tree is applied annually with a maximum of 750 g LAN and 2 kg superphosphate. Cashew trees are subject to zinc deficiency that can be treated with 200 g zinc oxide/100 l water applied as a leaf spray.
Propagation	Self-pollination and cross-pollination play an important role in the formation of cashew seed. Seedlings therefore show great variation and no "true to type" trees can be grown from seed. Selected trees should preferably be multiplied by grafting or air layering because vegetative propagation will ensure the best production and quality. Trees that are precocious bearers and grow vigorously are selected.

Harvest	Gathering fallen, ripe fruit is better than picking unripe fruit from the tree. Harvesting should be completed within one week to avoid nuts from rotting and nuts should be harvesting daily in wet weather as nuts rot quickly in damp weather.
Nutritional Properties	Cashews are rich in iron, phosphorus, selenium, magnesium and zinc. They are also good sources of phytochemicals, antioxidants, and protein.
Health Benefits	Cashew nuts can prevent cancer, good for cardiovascular health, good for hair and skin, strengthen bones, good for nerves, prevent gall stones and promote weight loss.
Commercial Uses	There are more than 200 registered patents of different uses of shell oil especially in the manufacture of numerous materials that have to be heat resistant, One of the most important uses is in the manufacture of brake linings. friction, acids and caustic products, eg. clutch plates, special isolators, varnish and plastic materials. The wood is insect repellent and used in making book cases and packing crates. The gum is a replacement for gum arabic and used as insect repellent glue in book bindings. In the nut and the apple, a compound has been found that combats tooth decay.
Food Suggestion	<p>Chicken With Cashew Nuts</p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 lb. chicken breast, diced in 3/4 inch pieces 3/4 c. cashew nuts 1 bowl diced celery 1 tsp. sesame oil 1/2 c. water chestnuts 2 c. oil 1 tsp. cornstarch mixed with 2 tsp. cold water

Sauce Ingredients:

- 1 tsp. light soy sauce
- 1 tsp. dry sherry wine
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. dark soy sauce
- 1/4 c. chicken broth
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

SAUCE: Combine ingredients in a bowl.

- 1). Heat wok or deep skillet and add the oil. Turn heat to low and wait until oil is hot.
- 2). Add chicken pieces to fry slowly. When the chicken has turned white, remove from wok and set aside.
- 3) Remove all the oil, except about 2 teaspoons.
- 4) Turn heat to high and add the sauce ingredients. When it comes to a boil, add cornstarch paste slowly and stir.
- 5) Then add the chicken and cashew nuts, celery and water chestnuts.
- 6) Keep stirring until gravy has thickened.
- 7) Finally add the sesame oil.