

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF UNANI AND INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE



E-ISSN: 2616-4558  
P-ISSN: 2616-454X  
IJUM 2018; 2(1): 06-10  
Received: 02-11-2017  
Accepted: 03-12-2017

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## Fruits of medicinal importance

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### Abstract

Fruits and vegetable are universally promoted as healthy. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 recommend you make one-half of your plate fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables include a diverse group of plant foods that vary greatly in content of energy and nutrients. Fruits and vegetables also supply vitamins and minerals to the diet and are sources of phytochemicals that function as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, and antiinflammatory agents and through other protective mechanisms. Non communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus, currently kill more people every year than any other cause of death. Four factors in the epidemiology of these diseases – poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol use – are of overwhelming importance to public health. Fruit and vegetables are an important component of a healthy diet and, if consumed daily in sufficient amounts, could help prevent major diseases such as CVDs and certain cancers. Diets high in fruits and vegetables are widely recommended for their health-promoting properties. Fruits and vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins, especially vitamins C and A; minerals, especially electrolytes; and more recently phytochemicals, especially antioxidants. Additionally, fruits and vegetables are recommended as a source of dietary fiber. In this article, medicinal properties of some fruits have been discussed.

**Keywords:** Fruits, medicinal importance, health, Unani

### Introduction

Non communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus, currently kill more people every year than any other cause of death.

Four factors in the epidemiology of these diseases – poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol use – are of overwhelming importance to public health. Fruit and vegetables are an important component of a healthy diet and, if consumed daily in sufficient amounts, could help prevent major diseases such as CVDs and certain cancers.

According to The World Health Report 2002, low fruit and vegetable intake is estimated to cause about 31% of ischaemic heart disease and 11% of stroke worldwide. Overall it is estimated that up to 2.7 million lives could potentially be saved each year if fruit and vegetable consumption was sufficiently increased. Recommendations in this direction tend to complement and reinforce other valid messages based on the long known health benefits of consuming vegetables and fruit as dietary sources of fibre, vegetable proteins and protective micronutrients.

The recent Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases, recommended the intake of a minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables per day (excluding potatoes and other starchy tubers) for the prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, as well as for the prevention and alleviation of several micronutrient deficiencies, especially in less developed countries.<sup>2</sup> The recommendation thus adds to the already strong case for the health benefits to be gained from the consumption of fruit and vegetables and paves the way for concrete action advocating increased consumption of these commodities.

WHO has responded to the global rise in NCDs by giving increasing attention to their prevention and control, most recently through the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health endorsed at the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly on 22 May 2004.<sup>3</sup> Within the framework of this Global Strategy, WHO aims to actively promote an increase in fruit and vegetable intake worldwide. To reach this goal, WHO and FAO have formed a partnership around the theme of fruit and vegetables for health.

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Diets high in fruits and vegetables are widely recommended for their health-promoting properties. Fruits and vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins, especially vitamins C and A; minerals, especially electrolytes; and more recently phytochemicals, especially antioxidants. Additionally, fruits and vegetables are recommended as a source of dietary fiber.

Certain fruits and vegetables are rich sources of vitamin C, but these rich sources (citrus fruits, strawberries, green peppers, white potatoes) are spread over many fruit and vegetable categories. Other fruits and vegetables, including avocado, corn, potatoes, and dried beans, are rich in starch, whereas sweet potatoes are mostly sucrose, not starch. Fruits (except bananas) and dark green vegetables contain little or no starch. Often, dietary guidance rules place fruit juices and potatoes in separate categories, because of dietary directives to eat whole fruits and minimize consumption of foods high in fat and sodium, i.e., French fries.

The following are the fruits which have medicinal properties:

### 1. Papaya

**Unani Name:** Papeeta

**Botanical Name:** *Carica papaya*

**Habitat:** Considered a native of the W. Indies, the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and perhaps of Brazil.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Digestive
- Appetizer
- Carminative
- Diuretic
- Emenagogue
- Anthelmintic

### 2. Water Melon

**Unani Name:** Tarbuz

**Botanical Name:** *Citrullus vulgaris*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated along the river sides on sandy areas. It is commonly found in India.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Sedative to bile
- Diuretic

### 3. Citron

**Unani Name:** Turanj

**Botanical Name:** *Citrus medica*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated in hilly areas.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Antidote to poisons
- Antidysentric

### 4. Mulberry

**Unani Name:** Toot

**Botanical Name:** *Morus indica*

**Habitat:** In India, it is found in hilly and plain areas.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Deobstruent
- Laxative
- Expectorant
- Sedative to bile
- Anti-inflammatory

### 5. Jambul

**Unani Name:** Jamun

**Botanical name:** *Eugenia jambolana*

**Habitat:** It is found throughout India.

#### Medicinal Paroperties

- Astringent
- Haemostatic
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Hypoglycemic

### 6. Chilkosa

**Unani Name:** Chilghoza

**Botanical Name:** *Pinus gerardiana*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated in hilly areas.

#### Medicinal Properties

- General tonic
- Aphrodisiac
- Semen viscositive
- Expectorant
- Calorific

### 7. Musk Melon

**Unani Name:** Kharpaza

**Botanical Name:** *Cucumis melo* Linn.

**Habitat:** It is found in India in large quantity.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Nutrient
- Diaphoretic
- Lithotriptic
- Deobstruent

### 8. Dates

**Unani Name:** Khajur

**Botanical Name:** *Poenix dactylefera*

**Habitat:** It is commonly found in Arab and Iran and also found in India.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Nutrient
- Aphrodisiac
- Neurotonic
- Haemopoietic
- Anabolic and Androgenic

### 9. Peaches

**Unani Name:** Arhoo

**Botanical Name:** *Prunus persica*

**Habitat:** Probably indigenous in China commonly cultivated in W. Asia, Europe. Also in Baluchistan, in the Himalya, kunawar up to 10,000 ft in the plains of N. India, in Manipur and upper Burma.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Antipyretic
- Sedative for bile and blood
- Laxative

### 10. Perries

**Unani Name:** Falsa shakri

**Botanical Name:** *Grewia asiatica*

**Habitat:** It is equatorial Plant. It is usually found in the regions of Asia.

#### Medicinal properties

- Cardiotonic

- Stomachic
- Hepatonic
- Antiemetic
- Antinauseating
- Antihiccough
- Hypoglycemic
- Used in palpitation

### 11. Lemon

**Unani Name:** Lemun

**Botanical Name:** *Citrus limonum* Linn.

**Habitat:** Throughout India, cultivated in plains and hills in areas up to 1200 m elevation.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Detergent
- Demulcent
- Antiemetic
- Antinauseating
- Desiccant
- Hepatonic
- Stomachic
- Antiseptic
- Antibacterial
- Digestive
- Appetizer
- Antidandruff

### 12. Grapes

**Unani Name:** *Angol*

**Botanical Name:** *Vitis venifera*

**Habitat:** A native of W. Asia. Cultivated in many parts of India especially in N. W. India.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Cardiotoxic
- Sedative for bile and phlegm
- Laxative
- Concoctive
- Used in Gastritis
- Liver tonic
- Aphrodisiac
- Anabolic and Androgenic

### 13. Myrobalan

**Unani Name:** Halela

**Botanical Name:** *Terminalia chebula*

**Habitat:** It is commonly found in Asam, Bengal, Mumbai and Chennai.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Brain tonic
- Blood moderator and purifier
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Used in facial paralysis and piles

### 14. Mango

**Unani Name:** Aam

**Botanical Name:** *Mangifera indica*

**Habitat:** It is famous fruit of India and Pakistan. It is cultivated in Egypt, Sweden, Srilanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, Oman etc.

#### Medicinal properties

- Sedative
- Laxative

- Diuretic
- Antiemetic
- General tonic

### 15. Guava

**Unani Name:** Amrood

**Botanical Name:** *Psidium gnaiva*

**Habitat:** Original place is South America but which is cultivated in India and Pakistan is famous for his taste.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Astringent
- Haemostatic
- Cardiotoxic
- General tonic
- Stomachic
- Appetizer

### 16. Pineapple

**Unani Name:** Ananas

**Botanical Name:** *Ananas sativas* schutt

**Habitat:** Its actual habitat is South America. In India, it is cultivated in Asam, East Bengal and eastern India.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Nutrient
- Exhilarant
- Cardiotoxic
- Brain tonic
- Diuretic
- Laxative
- Used in Jaundice

### 17. White Pumpkin

**Unani Name:** Petha

**Botanical Name:** *Benincasa hespida*

**Habitat:** Probably a native of Japan and Java. Cultivated more or less throughout India and in many warm countries.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Febrile sedative
- Diuretic
- Haemostatic

### 18. Water Chest Nut

**Unani Name:** Singhara

**Botanical Name:** *Trapabin spinosa* Roxb

**Habitat:** Throughout India, Ceylon and tropical Africa.

#### Medicinal Properties

- Febrile sedative
- Aphrodisiac
- Semen producing
- Tonic for gums
- Analgesic

### 19. Coconut

**Unani Name:** Nariyal

**Botanical Name:** *Cocos nucifera* Linn.

**Habitat:** It is commonly found in Srilanka. In India, it is found in Bengal, Chennai and Asam.

#### Medicinal properties

- General tonic
- Brain tonic
- Antitussive
- Anthelmintic

- Diuretic
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Antidandruff

## 20. Apple

**Unani Name:** Seb

**Botanical Name:** *Pyrus malus*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated in all the moderate parts of the world. It is also cultivated in European countries like Italy, France and Germany.

### Medicinal Properties

- Haemopoietic
- Tonic for gums
- Analgesic
- Cardiotonic
- Lithotriptic
- Appetizer
- Digestive
- Liver tonic
- Hypnotic
- Aphrodisiac
- Anthelmintic

## 21. Custard Apple

**Unani Name:** Shareefa

**Botanical Name:** *Annona squamosa*

**Habitat:** It is a plant of hot and wet climate. It is famous fruit of India and Pakistan. It is cultivated in Pakistan.

### Medicinal Properties

- Antacid
- Antihaemorrhoids
- Appetizer
- Digestive
- Anthelmintic
- General tonic
- Cardiotonic
- Aphrodisiac
- Diuretic

## 22. Pear

**Unani Name:** Nashpati

**Botanical Name:** *Pyrus communis*

**Habitat:** Its main habitat is Central America. It is also cultivated in South Africa and Australia.

### Medicinal properties

- Laxative
- Tonic for vital organs
- Sedative for blood
- Antacid
- Haemopoietic
- Antispasmodic
- Blood purifier

## 23. Litchi

**Unani Name:** Leechi

**Botanical Name:** *Litchi chinensis*

**Habitat:** It is evergreen fruit of equator. Its main habitat is china. It is also cultivated in India, Bangladesh, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Malaysia and Pakistan.

### Medicinal Properties

- Tonic for gums
- Antiscorvy

- Brain tonic
- Nervine tonic
- Sedative for blood
- Cardiotonic
- Antipyretic

## 24. Orange

**Unani Name:** Sangtara

**Botanical Name:** *Citrus sinensis*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated in India, Pakistan, America, Italy and South Africa.

### Medicinal Properties

- Antipyretic
- Blood purifier
- Cardiotonic
- Digestive
- Laxative
- Antitussive

## 25. Banana

**Unani Name:** Kela

**Botanical Name:** *Paradisiaca musa*

**Habitat:** It is cultivated in different countries like West Indies, Brazil, East and South Africa, Indonesia and India.

### Medicinal Properties

- Laxative
- Haemopoietic
- Used in skin diseases
- Antiarthritis
- Antispasmodic
- Antidysentric

## 26. Cedar

**Unani Name:** Ber

**Botanical Name:**

**Habitat:** Its main habitat is China. It is also found in india.

### Medicinal Properties

- General tonic
- Antiflatulance
- Anthelmintic
- Digestive
- Appetizer
- Antiallergic
- Antiseptic
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Liver tonic

## 27. Sapodilla

**Unani Name:** Cheeku

**Botanical Name:** *Manikara zapota*

**Habitat:** Its main habitat is Mexico. In India, it is cultivated in Surat and Mumbai.

### Medicinal Properties

- Febrile sedative
- Cardiotonic
- Tonic for gums
- Antipyretic
- Brain tonic

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