



## Bitter Gourd

Bitter gourd (*Momordica charantia*), also known as bitter melon, is a popular vegetable in Asia. It provides essential micronutrients and dietary fiber required for good health. Bitter gourd has been used in traditional medicine for managing diabetes and other diseases. In the past decade, scientific evidence increasingly has shown that bitter gourd can contribute to lowering high blood sugar and high blood pressure, and help in maintaining a healthy weight.

## Preparing Bitter Gourd

The tender fruit of bitter gourd can be eaten as a salad, consumed as juice, or cooked in different dishes. The leaves and seeds also can be used for cooking. Bitter gourd can be substituted for different vegetables in your favorite dishes. In Asian cultures, the white spongy pulp of the fruit is usually removed due to its strong bitterness. In India, bitter gourd is stir-fried with spices or stewed in a curry. To reduce the bitterness, the bitter gourd slices are soaked in tamarind water. In Taiwan, bitter gourd is often cooked with pineapple in chicken soup. Soaking bitter gourd slices in ice water, salt and lemon juice can lessen the bitterness. Bitter gourd slices can be baked into chips. Dried fruits and leaves are made into tea, which is popular in Southeast Asia. Fresh bitter gourd juice mixed with fruit is a refreshing drink for a hot day.

## Bitter Gourd Recipes

These recipes are designed for culinary use only and have not been proven to lower blood glucose.

### Guava Pineapple Bitter Gourd Juice

**Servings: 4-6**

#### Ingredients

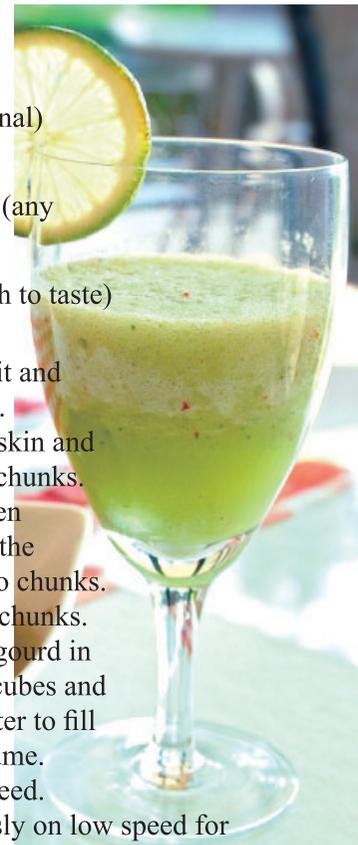
- 1 cup guava chunks
- 1 cup apple chunks (optional)
- 1 cup pineapple chunks
- 1 cup ice cubes
- 1 cup bitter gourd chunks (any variety of bitter gourd)
- Water
- 2 tbsp of honey (or enough to taste)

#### Directions

1. Rinse and wash the fruit and bitter gourd thoroughly.
2. Remove the pineapple skin and cut the fruit into small chunks.
3. Cut the bitter gourd open lengthwise and remove the seeds and pulp. Cut into chunks.
4. Cut the other fruit into chunks.
5. Put the fruit and bitter gourd in a blender, then add ice cubes and honey. Add enough water to fill half of the blender volume.
6. Blend twice on high speed. Then, blend continuously on low speed for 2 minutes or until smooth. Serve chilled. Enjoy!

Drinking bitter gourd fresh as a juice retains many of the nutrients and bioactive compounds beneficial for health that may be lost in different cooking methods.

This beverage is not recommended for people with hypoglycemia.



### Bitter Gourd Curry

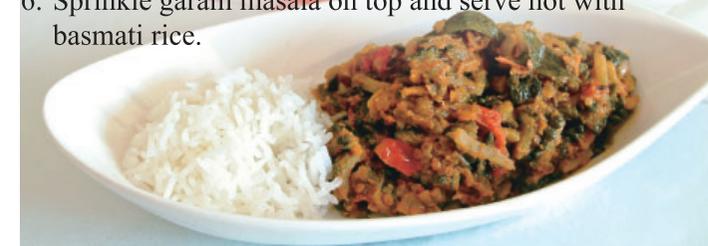
**Servings: 2-4**

#### Ingredients

- 2-3 medium-sized bitter gourds, deseeded and cut into thin slices (dark green variety)
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp cumin seed
- 1/4 tsp red chili powder
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp coriander powder
- 1/4 tsp dried mango powder
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 pinch sugar
- Optional: 2-3 green chilies, finely chopped
- 1/4 tsp garam masala (mixed Indian spices)

#### Directions

1. Heat oil in a pan.
2. Add cumin seed and once it begins to sizzle, add onions and green chilies. Fry onions until tender and brown.
3. Add tomatoes, ginger-garlic paste and dried mango powder.
4. Add red chili powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder and salt. Sauté to blend in the spices and continue cooking until the oil separates.
5. Add salt and sliced bitter gourd, cover and cook for 7-8 minutes or until the bitter gourd is cooked.
6. Sprinkle garam masala on top and serve hot with basmati rice.





# Bitter Gourd

## The Bitter Gourd Project

AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center and its partners from India, Tanzania, and Taiwan are studying the potential of bitter melon in managing type 2 diabetes and promoting good health.

The Bitter Gourd Project is a project of AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany. Project collaborators: Justus-Liebig University (Germany), Punjab Agricultural University (India), Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (Tanzania), and National Taiwan University (Taiwan).

## AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center

### For more information

#### The Bitter Gourd Project

[www.bitter-gourd.org](http://www.bitter-gourd.org)  
Contact: [info@bitter-gourd.org](mailto:info@bitter-gourd.org)

#### International Diabetes Foundation

<http://www.idf.org/worlddiabetesday/>

#### World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/diabetes/>

### Precautions

Consumption of high quantities of bitter melon may not be suitable for:

- \* People with low blood glucose levels (hypoglycemia)
- \* Pregnant and lactating mothers
- \* Young children
- \* Diabetes patients on oral drug treatment

Bitter melon should not be consumed on an empty stomach.



*recipes  
for  
good health*

