

Food Feature: Bamboo Shoots

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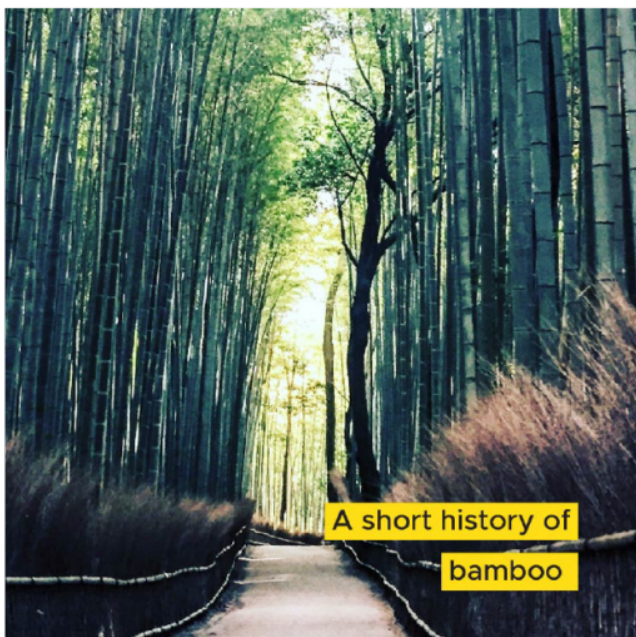


Food Feature: Bamboo Shoots

We often think of pandas as gentle giants, but did you know that they actually consume as much protein as most other carnivorous animals? Young bamboo shoots can comprise nearly 30% protein, and play an important role in the panda's diet! These herbivores are definitely onto something!

At around the 2nd week, new bamboo canes (or the bamboo shoots) are harvested as food. These are crisp, tender stalks that have a similar crunch to asparagus, and a sweetness similar to corn. While the bamboo tree is a perennial crop, bamboo shoots tend to be harvested during the winter and spring seasons.

Bamboo shoots are a popular cooking ingredient in South-East Asia and can be cooked in many different ways, boiled, sauteed, braised, slow-cooked with other vegetables or even stir-fried! Make sure to boil it thoroughly first as the raw shoots contain a fatal toxin called hydrocyanic acid.



A short history of
bamboo



Bamboo Shoots: Nutrition
packed with a crunch!

A short history of bamboo

The bamboo plant has a long storied history in Chinese civilisation, prized for its use as a building material and for its delicious shoots. Originating in Southern China, bamboo tree cultivation gradually spread across South America

and Africa. Evidence of bamboo shoots being eaten as food can be found in ancient Chinese literature dating back to the Tang dynasty (7th century AD) which talked about the benefits of these little shoots. As bamboo thrives in the tropical and subtropical climates, its cultivation has remained largely concentrated in East and South East Asia. However, you might just be able to find canned bamboo shoots near you! If you have the luxury of finding raw bamboo shoots, preparation is simple; make an incision to expose the soft flesh, cover with water and simmer for 30 mins. Soak in cold water to remove any excess bitterness.

Bamboo Shoots: Nutrition packed with a crunch!

Bamboo shoots are not only tasty but they are also packed full with nutrients! A one cup serving of cooked shoots gives 18% daily value of potassium, 17% of fiber and 7% of protein. Bamboo shoots also possess unique lignans and phenolic compounds that have potential for anticancer, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. All this at a mere 14 calories!



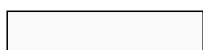
Bamboo and its use in Traditional Chinese Medicine

The use of bamboo shoots in traditional medicine was first

recorded in pharmaceutical texts during the Ming Dynasty (14th-17th century). The four main parts of bamboo that are used include the bamboo shavings, dried sap, liquid sap and leaves. These are characterised as having a ‘cooling’ effect in Traditional Chinese Medicine, and are used to treat ailments ranging from acute fevers to phlegm, asthma, even eczema. Scientists are also studying the extracts of bamboo leaves for promising antioxidant effect on diabetes and cancer.

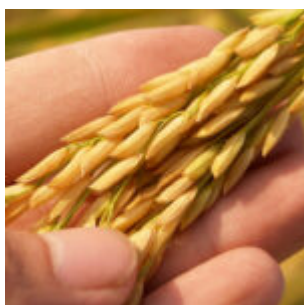
Good food that’s also great for the environment

Apart from its rich nutrition, there are many reasons why this versatile superfood is ready to take the world by storm! As a tree crop, bamboo grows quickly, sometimes hitting spurts of 1m in a day. The bamboo tree itself also absorbs carbon dioxide and produces 30% more oxygen than an equivalent mass of trees. With the tensile strength of steel, this is one of nature’s own building material! There are countless other uses for bamboo; in furniture, as cooling fibers for clothing, musical instruments, a natural deodorizer, for paper, even bamboo beer!



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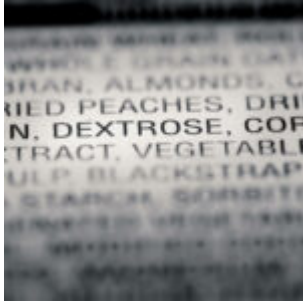


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