

Grin to grow

Mixed salad the Chinese way

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in Guangdong

Rows and rows of neatly stacked Chinese cabbage, carrots, white turnip, winter melon, pumpkin, cucumber and crates of Fuji apples, pears, bananas, mangoes, dragon fruit and oranges infested either side of the small lanes when you enter China's largest fruit and vegetable distributing center, the Jiangnan Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market in the Guangdong province.

Established in 1994 under the support of the Chinese Government, the market had expanded throughout the years to become the largest distributing center in Southeast Asia.

It is established by the country's Agriculture Ministry and the National Vegetable Circulation Association to act as the wholesale market and model for China.

Many varieties of fruits ranging from the New Zealand Kiwifruit to the Thailand Durian can be purchased at the market.

Employees pedaling bicycles with crates of fruit latched onto the backlap of their bicycles or sacks full of fresh vegetables being



Painting of a Chinese girl taking vegetables to the market



A Chinese vegetable seller at the market

loaded off trucks are common sights early in the mornings or late at night for those are the times when fruit and vegetable transaction is at its peak. In addition imported pickles too are of great demand as well as sacks full of a range of assortments of beans. "We experiment with more

then 200 samples of the goods each day to check if they are suitable for consumption. If a product does not meet up to our standard, we remove it immediately and destroy the whole batch," an official of the Jiangnan Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market said.

The vegetable market comprises several sections where packing, loading and selling the goods takes place.

Special sections have been categorized for fruits and vegetables which are imported from each area of the world including Southeast Asia, South America, Australia and New Zealand. Two main areas make up the fruit trade zone: the western fruit trade area and the Southeast Asian fruit trade area. Around 80 percent of the fruits are imported from areas in China while the rest are from foreign countries.

The customers wander on foot or on bicycles to inspect and purchase the best buy. According to the officials the busiest time of the day is around 9 a.m. when the customers wander in to select fresh fruit, leaves and vegetables for their lunch or dinner menus.

The market where the daily trading volume crosses 10 million kilograms is roughly around 180,000 m² with over 500 wholesalers.

The vegetable trade zone is further divided in three sections: the dried vegetable trade area, the fresh vegetable trade area and the refrigerated vegetable trade area. With seven million kilos of daily trade in vegetable peaking to 10



million at times, the market accommodates around 80 percent of the local vegetables from Guangzhou. It then distributes its products to areas as wide as Hong Kong and Macao as well as areas all over China, Southeast Asia and Japan.

Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, the US, Chile and Canada are among the major trading partners in this market, which engages roughly 30,000 to 50,000 workers daily and has over 1,000

stores. Living in Guangzhou is an added advantage for those who hope to 'go green' as a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from all over China and the world flock to be transported or sold at the Jiangnan Market. A sewage treatment station, a garbage compression station and three electricity stations with the capacity of 15, 030 KVA are also a part of the market along with business offices, banks, restaurants, parking

lots, cold storages, ice work-shops and transport services. All together this whole environment makes up a miniature business zone amidst heaps of fruits and vegetables in Guangzhou. On the other hand the market seems to have benefited from the global economic downturn, trading 20 percent more products in 2008 as compared to the previous year.

Developing rapidly under practiced eyes, Jiangnan Market had come a long way. It had been recognized as the perfect place to purchase a realm of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The accolades which the market had received itself boasts of the quality of the products which arrive and are put on the shelves for customers.



Crates of fresh fruits on display

Ripe for reaping

Winter Melon

Wax Gourd, also called White Gourd, is a fast-growing, long-season, warm-climate vegetable. The plant produces fruits on vines, like the pumpkin on ground, which can grow up to 50 pounds.

The vegetable is also called *Tong Owa*, meaning 'Winter Melon' in Chinese. It makes a delicious and healthy dish cooked or mixed with a salad.



Ya Pear

Native to northern China the Ya pear is also known as the Chinese White pear. Sweet, crisp and delicious, the pear tastes like a cross between a rose and a pineapple. Pears are a good source of vitamin C and copper. Both of these nutrients are antioxidants which help protect cells in the body from oxygen-related damage due to free radicals.



Yardlong bean

The yardlong bean, is also known as the long-podded cowpea, asparagus bean, snake bean or Chinese long bean. Despite the name, the pods are actually only about half a yard long and come in pairs.

Edible pods are very crisp, tender and delicious.

Long beans are cut into shorter sections and cooked like common green beans. They make a tasty meal sautéed or Stir-fried as well.



Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe, sweet melon or Muskmelon is a species of melon that has been developed into many cultivated varieties. It originates from Australia but is quite popular among the Chinese. Closely related to cucumber the melon comes with an aromatic fragrance and equally delicious sweet taste.

Known to be rich in pro-vitamin A, vitamins C and B9 the Cantaloupe makes a delicious and healthy dessert after meals. It is also good as a drink or mixed with salad. You should consider a well rounded shape, heavy weight and the pleasant melon smell when purchasing the fruit.

Dragon Fruit

This round, often red with prominent scales in dry, tropical or climates. Propagation is through seeds or cuttings. The fruit encloses a sweetly flavored and small black seeds.

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Longan

Commonly known as the 'Dragon Eye' this fruit resembles an eyeball once it is shelled. The eatable part reveals a black seed surrounded by translucent flesh. It is a tropical tree native to southern China and Southeast Asia.

The fruit is extremely sweet, juicy and succulent and is often used in East Asian soups, snacks, desserts, and sweet-and-sour foods, either fresh or dried, sometimes canned with syrup in supermarkets. Dried longan are often used in Chinese cuisine and Chinese sweet dessert soups. In Chinese food therapy and herbal medicine, it is believed to have an effect on relaxation.



Durian

Durian is no stranger to our market but it is equally common and famous among the most sought after items in the Chinese market.

This delicious tasting fruit, though it comes with a strong odour, is mainly imported from Thailand to China. It is nicknamed as 'King of all fruits' and its original name derives from the Malaysian term 'Duri' meaning thorn for the fruit embodies a thick, tough and thorny husk.

In folk medicine, the juice of the durian leaves is applied to the head on patients with fever. Boiling the leaves and roots in water is also taken to lower the fever.

Eating durian is good for the health as it is a good source of energy, carbohydrates, dietary fiber and protein. Durian fruit is also cholesterol free.



Lotus stem

Lotus stems are very much used in Asian cuisines and are much relished for their taste and nutritional value. They are very rich in iron and calcium content besides high dietary fiber. It is highly recommended for pregnant women.



Pictures:
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Chinese Cabbage

There are many kinds of Chinese Cabbages that can be grouped based on size, shape, heading and non-heading.

Also known as Snow Cabbage it is a Chinese leaf vegetable which is often used in the Chinese cuisine. Chinese cabbages are excellent for stir-fry and pickling.

The vegetable is related to the Western cabbage and is of the same species as the common turnip. The Ming Dynasty pharmacologist Li Shizhen studied the Chinese cabbage for its medicinal qualities.

Before this incident the vegetable was largely confined to the Yangtze River Delta region. Today it is popular not only in the Chinese market but many areas in the world.



Fuji apple

With lovely pink speckled flush over a yellow-green background the fuji apple is one of the most attractive modern apple varieties to ever hit the market. This product which is imported from Japan is crisp and



juicy with a refreshing taste, especially when chilled. Apart from being eaten as a fresh fruit, the apple is delicious in salads, apple pies and sauce.

Kiwifruit is native to the Yangtze River valley of northern China and Zhejiang Province on the coast of eastern China and is popularly known as 'macaque peach'.

The seeds of the fruit was then brought to New Zealand and cultivated as a backyard vine. This fruit consists of a hairy, brown peel containing

green flesh, with white pulp in the center, surrounded by black, edible seeds. The fruit has a sweet taste, similar to a mixture of banana, pineapple and strawberry. The fruit

is rich in Vitamin C, A, and E. It also contains potassium and an important Omega 3 fatty acid named Alfa-Linoleic. It is a especially good for those suffering from asthma.

