

# South Pacific Commission

Community  
Education  
Training Centre

South  
Pacific  
Foods

Leaflet **10**  
1986



## Pineapple

### Delicious and refreshing

People in the Pacific enjoy pineapple for its delicious flavour. Pineapple is very refreshing when a person is hot and tired, and can be grown in most places in the Pacific. On some islands this tropical fruit is grown in large amounts for export so that it can be enjoyed by people round the world.

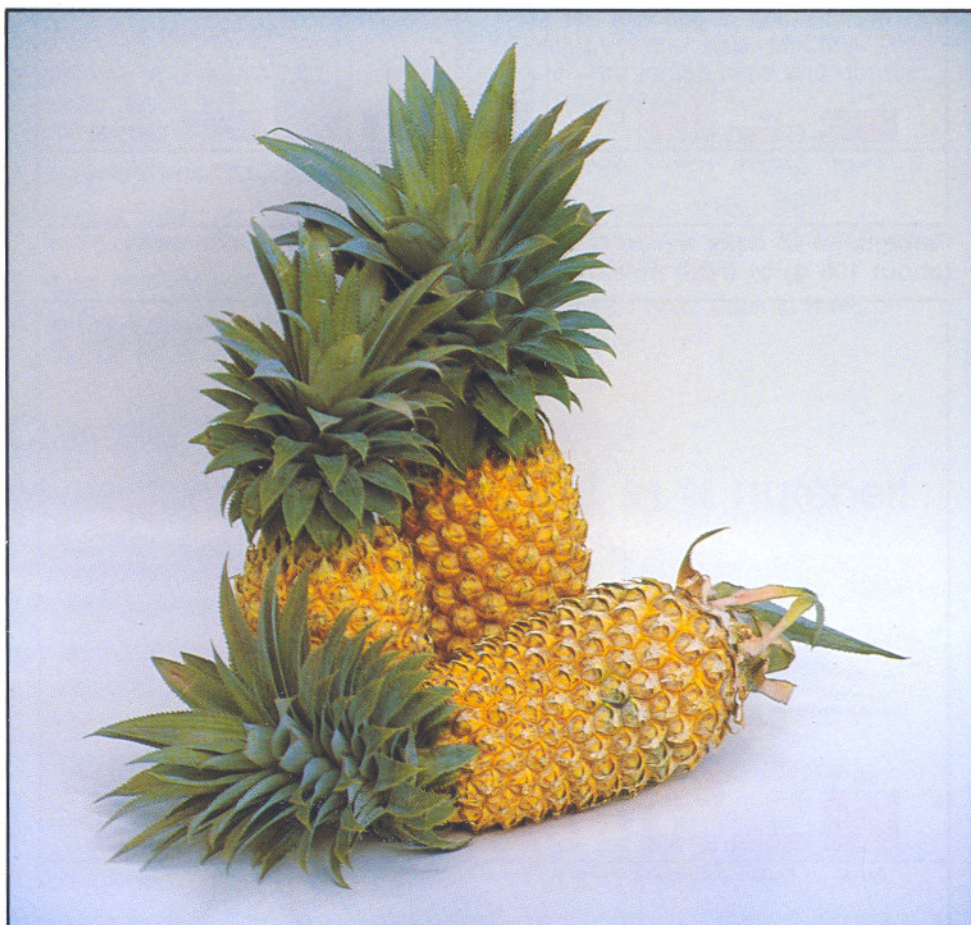
Pineapple is sweet tasting when it is ripe and has good food value. It is a protective, health-giving food. It contains important vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Pineapple is a local island food that can be prepared in many different ways to make full use of its flavour.

### Grown from suckers or tops



Pineapples grow on low-growing plants.



Pineapple has the scientific name *Ananas comusus*. The fruit of this low-growing plant forms on a stalk and has yellow or green and brown skin. Pineapple grows on most Pacific Islands but requires a good, well-composted, well-drained soil. Because pineapple plants do not cover the ground well, the soil is exposed to the sun and weeds can grow very fast. Weeds must be controlled so that a good crop of fruit can be obtained. If waste material from other crops is available, this can be spread over the ground as a mulch to keep down weed growth.

Pineapples can be planted in rows or individually. Suckers and tops are the two main kinds of planting materials. Suckers grow round the bottom of the mature plant during the fruiting season. They can be cut from the plant about one month after picking the fruit. After removing a few of the leaves from the cut end, the suckers

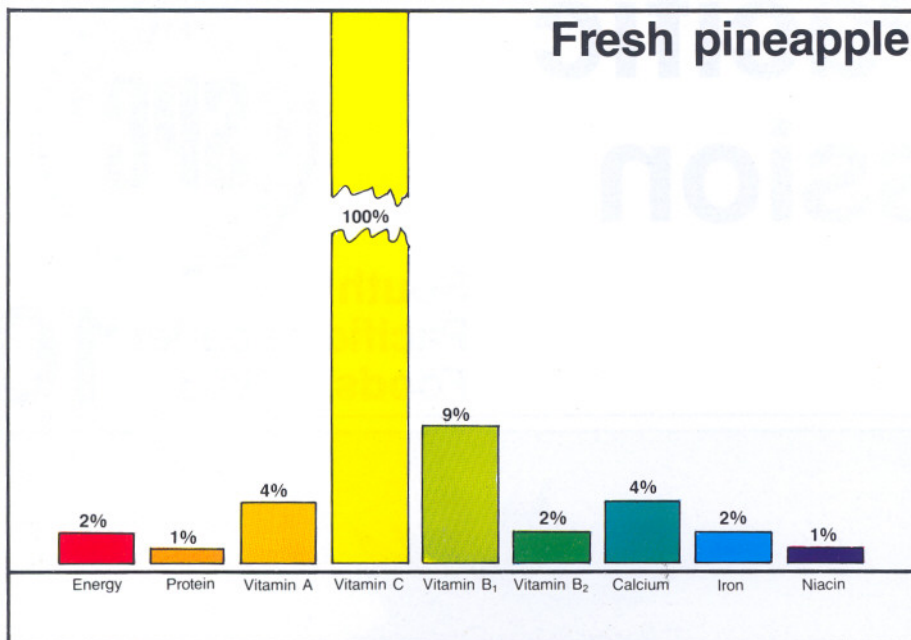
should be dried in the sun for 1 to 2 days before planting. They will fruit about 12 months after planting.

It is also possible to plant pineapples using the tops from the fruits. The tops are twisted off and planted. After about 18 months they will produce fruit.

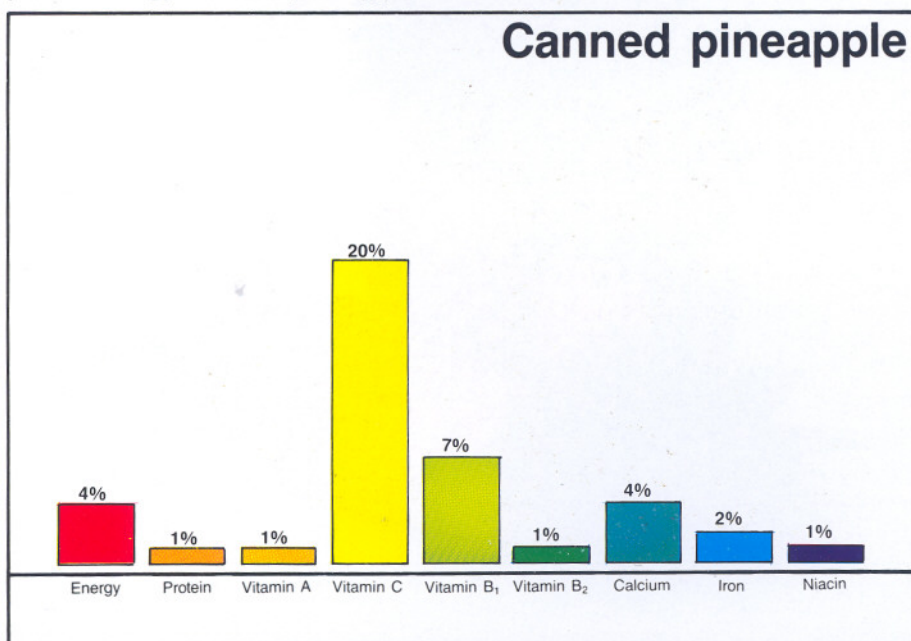
Pineapples are most plentiful during the main fruiting season, but there is also a smaller season six months later. Pineapples can be forced to fruit at other times (off-season) by applying special chemicals to mature plants. Because many people want these off-season pineapples, they can be sold for high prices.

Only ripe pineapples should be picked. When picked green, pineapples will not get sweeter like many other types of fruit. Pineapples are usually sweetest when there has been a large amount of sunshine during the growing season.





Percentage of daily needs of an adult woman, filled by one serving (about 100 g) of fresh pineapple<sup>1</sup>



Percentage of daily needs of an adult woman, filled by one serving (about 100 g) of canned pineapple<sup>2</sup>

## Fibre for fitness

Pineapple contains **fibre**. Fibre is needed to help the intestines and bowels work properly. Eating foods high in fibre, such as vegetables and fruits, gives the body the fibre it needs. Today, many Pacific Island people eat a lot of refined foods such as white rice and flour. These foods do not contain much fibre, and so many people suffer from health problems such as constipation.

Pineapple is a good source of **Vitamin C**, which keeps body tissues strong, helps the body use iron, and helps chemical actions in the body. It is a fair source of **Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>** (thiamin), which helps the body to convert carbohydrates into energy and heat.

Eating fresh fruits is much better than eating canned fruits. The bar graphs show that fresh pineapple provides much more Vitamin C than the same amount of canned pineapple. Vitamin C is easily destroyed by heat. A lot of heat is used when foods are canned.

## A useful fruit

Raw pineapple contains a special substance (called Bromelin) which can be used to soften tough meat. Only fresh, uncooked pineapple has this special ingredient. Once pineapple is cooked or canned, the special substance is destroyed.

Meat can be softened by soaking it in a pineapple marinade. To make this marinade, mix cooking oil and lemon juice. Use twice as much oil as lemon juice. Add slices of fresh pineapple to the mixture and let the meat sit in this marinade for two hours before cooking it.

Raw pineapple will also destroy gelatin. Use only cooked pineapple in any recipe that contains gelatin.

## Preparation and serving

Fresh pineapple is delicious just sliced, used in fruit salads or in desserts. Serve pineapple by itself or with other fruits, vegetables, meat or fish. Eating pineapple raw is the best way to make use of the Vitamin C in it.

To prepare a pineapple, cut off the top and bottom pieces. Remove the rough outside peel. Cut the pineapple lengthwise into pieces and remove the core, if desired. Save any juice that drips out for young children. Instead of throwing away the skin and the core, use them to prepare a delicious pineapple drink.

### Pineapple drink

1. Cut the pineapple peel and core into small pieces. Put them into a pot and cover with water. Put on the lid and bring to the boil.
2. Boil for 20 minutes. Boiling for a shorter time may cause the drink to go sour later.
3. Strain and store in a clean container. It will keep for one or two days if covered and kept in a cool place.
4. Serve cool.
5. For a different flavour, mix the pineapple drink with other fruit juices or slices of banana.

Another way to serve pineapple is to make fresh pineapple juice. Pineapple juice is excellent as a drink for people of all ages.

### Fresh pineapple juice

1. Prepare pineapple in the usual way, as described above.
2. Grate or cut the pineapple into 2.5 cm (1 inch) cubes.
3. Put the grated pineapple or cubes into a clean cloth and squeeze the juice out into a clean container.
4. Serve the juice cool.

The leftover pulp can be dried and used in baking buns or cakes or for flavouring meat and fish dishes.



## Preservation

By using special chemicals it is now possible to get fresh pineapple at any time of the year. However, it can be very expensive to buy fresh pineapple in the off-season. You can save money by preserving some pineapple in the main season when it is cheaper. The delicious flavour of pineapple then can be enjoyed at any time.

Pineapple can be preserved in a number of ways. It can be dried, frozen or made into jams, pickles or chutneys.

**Drying** — Dried pineapple makes delicious and nutritious snacks for children. It can be sold in stores to take the place of less nutritious snacks. Dried pineapple can also be used in meat and fish dishes or in desserts.

### Dried pineapple

1. Choose fruit that is firm and not over ripe.
2. Peel the pineapple and cut it into 7 mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) slices. Remove the core if it is too fibrous.
3. Lay the slices in the sun or in a solar drier until dry. This will usually take  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 days. If flies are a problem, cover the fruit with netting.
4. If there is not enough sun, finish drying the pineapple slices in a cool oven.
5. Store in clean, tightly sealed jars or plastic bags.

**Freezing** is another way of preserving pineapple. Prepare the fruit in the usual way and cut into cubes. Put it into plastic bags, seal and freeze. When it is thawed and eaten, it will not be as crisp as fresh pineapple.

Pineapple juice can also be frozen. Pour the juice into ice-cube trays and freeze. When frozen remove the cubes from the trays and store frozen in sealed plastic bags.

## Sweet potato and pineapple casserole

*Six servings:*

- 4 medium sweet potatoes, cooked and sliced
- 2 cups cheese sauce (see below)
- 1 tablespoon grated coconut
- 1 fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped spring onions
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- Salt to taste

1. Grease a baking dish.
2. Arrange in layers, sliced pineapple, sliced sweet potato, grated coconut and spring onions.
3. Spread cheese sauce.
4. Repeat layers until all sweet potato and pineapple have been used.
5. Bake in a hot oven for 30 minutes.
6. Serve hot as a vegetable with cooked meat or fish.

## Cheese sauce

*Two cups:*

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 heaped tablespoon flour
- 2 heaped tablespoons grated cheese
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Melt butter, stir in flour using a wooden spoon.
2. Cook over gentle heat for 3 minutes without browning.
3. Remove from heat and gradually stir in half the milk, stir hard until well blended.
4. Return to heat, cook slowly until sauce thickens, stirring all the time.
5. Gradually add remaining milk.
6. Bring to the boil.
7. Add grated cheese and salt and pepper to taste, mix well.

## Pineapple-avocado salad

*Six servings:*

- 2 cups pineapple slices
- 3 large avocados
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- Juice of one lemon or lime
- Selection of fresh green salad vegetables

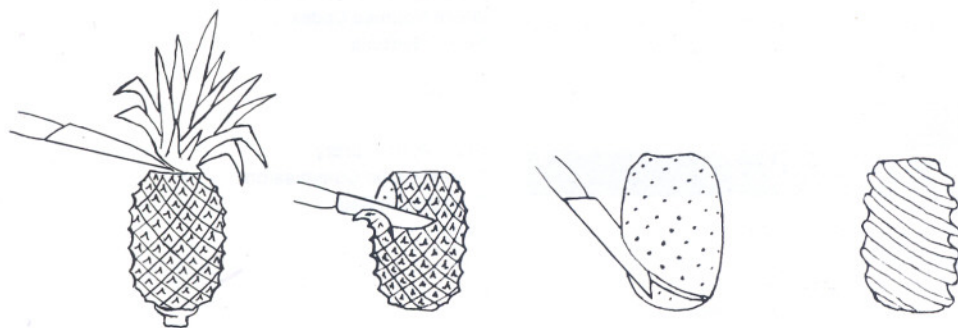
1. Cut each pineapple slice into 4 pieces.
2. Cut the avocado in half, remove seed, peel and slice. Mix the water and lemon juice and dip the avocado slices in it.
3. Wash and prepare the green vegetables.
4. Arrange the avocado and pineapple slices on a bed of fresh green vegetables.
5. Serve with cold, cooked meat or fish.

## Meal in a nutshell

*Two servings:*

- 4 small sweet potatoes
- 2 spring onions
- 1 tomato
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dark green leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup peanuts, chopped fish or corned beef
- $\frac{1}{4}$  medium pineapple, chopped
- 1 coconut

1. Peel and wash the sweet potatoes. Cut into small pieces.
2. Wash and chop onions, tomato and dark green leaves.
3. Grate the coconut and save the coconut shell
4. Prepare coconut cream.
5. Put all the vegetables, peanuts, fish or meat, and pineapple inside half the shell.
6. Pour coconut cream over the vegetable mixture.
7. Put the other half of the shell on the top and tie tightly in place.
8. Steam in a pan of water for about 45 minutes or bake in an earth oven.
9. Serve in the shell.



To prepare a pineapple, cut off the top and bottom, remove the peel and cut out the eyes by making diagonal cuts around the pineapple.

1. From *Food composition tables for use in the Pacific Islands*, South Pacific Commission, 1983.  
2. From *Food composition tables for use in East Asia*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1972.



## Pineapple-fish balls

*Six servings:*

750 g (1½ lb) fish  
1 small onion, chopped  
1 small unripe pawpaw  
1 cup pineapple pieces  
1 head Chinese cabbage  
4 tablespoons cooking oil, margarine or butter  
½ inch ginger, chopped or crushed  
½ teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon soya sauce  
1 cup water  
1 dessertspoon cornflour  
Salt to taste

1. Peel the pawpaw, remove seeds and cut lengthwise. Wash and chop the cabbage lengthwise.
2. Using a spoon or shell scrape the fish meat away from the bones and skin. Form into small balls.
3. Heat the oil, margarine or butter in a frying pan.
4. Gently fry the fish balls until cooked. Remove from the pan.
5. Fry the pawpaw and pineapple pieces.
6. Add the onion, cabbage stalks and lastly the cabbage leaves. Fry until just under-cooked.
7. Mix together the sugar, soya sauce, water and cornflour. Add to the vegetables and stir continuously until it boils.
8. Add fish balls and stir.
9. Serve hot with cooked taro, breadfruit or rice.

## Fresh fruit salad with coconut cream

*Six servings:*

1 cup thin coconut cream  
1 large pineapple  
6 ripe bananas  
1 pawpaw  
2 oranges  
2 ripe mangoes  
4 green limes or lemons  
Sugar to taste

1. Cut the pineapple in half lengthwise. Scoop out the pineapple flesh, leaving the two halves of the skin intact.
2. Cut the pineapple fruit into small pieces.
3. Peel and prepare the other fruits and cut into small pieces.
4. Sprinkle very lightly with sugar.
5. Add the lime juice.
6. Pour on the coconut cream. Mix well and pile fruit salad into the pineapple skins.
7. Serve cool.

## Pineapple chicken

*Six servings:*

1.5 kg (3 lb) chicken  
2 tablespoons butter, margarine or cooking oil  
2 cups pineapple pieces  
Salt to taste

1. Wash and cut up chicken into serving size pieces. Season with a little salt.
2. Fry in butter, margarine or oil until brown.
3. Cover and cook gently for about 20 minutes or until tender.
4. Drain off the fat and pour in the pineapple pieces.
5. Simmer uncovered for 5 minutes, spooning juice over chicken from time to time.
6. Serve with taro, sweet potato or rice, and vegetables.

## Cassava-pineapple savoury

*Two servings:*

2 cups grated cassava  
½ cup grated coconut  
2 cups crushed pineapple  
1 cup grated cheese  
½ cup chopped onion or spring onion

1. Mix grated cassava with grated coconut and press thinly into a greased flat baking dish or tray.
2. Spread crushed pineapple, chopped onion and grated cheese on top of the cassava mixture.
3. Bake in a moderate oven for 20 minutes until cooked and the topping is brown.

This leaflet is the tenth of a series devoted to the uses of local Pacific foods. Other leaflets available in this series are:

Leaflet 1 - Taro  
Leaflet 2 - Pawpaw  
Leaflet 3 - Mango  
Leaflet 4 - Guava  
Leaflet 5 - Cassava  
Leaflet 6 - Green leaves  
Leaflet 7 - Banana  
Leaflet 8 - Coconut  
Leaflet 9 - Breadfruit  
Leaflet 11 - Citrus fruits  
Leaflet 12 - Pumpkin  
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Leaflet 18 - Seafoods

Published by the South Pacific Commission and printed by Stredder Print Limited, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Original text: English.

Reprinted in 1995 with financial assistance from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ACP/EU.



SPC Cataloguing-in-publication data  
Pineapple.

(South Pacific foods leaflet ; 10)

1. Pineapple 2. Cookery (Pineapples)

I. Series

641.34774

AACR2

ISBN 982-203-436-9

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