

**AIZEN** *Boscia senegalensis*  
(*Boscia senegalensis*)



**A tree of aizen**

**Family:** [Capparaceae](#)

**Synonyms:** *Boscia octandra*

**Other names:** Hanza, hemmet,

**Aizen** is a fruit from Africa. It grows wild in Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Togo. It appears that aizen originated in this part of the world only.

Aizen bears small cherry sized fruits which are sweet. These are eaten fresh. The fruits can also be dried and form a caramel like substance.

**Description:**

An evergreen undershrub or more rarely a shrub, usually 1-2 m tall, but sometimes up to 4 m, particularly in good conditions; stem darkish.

Leaves greenish mat hue, coriaceous, spread or erect, elliptic, or ovate-elliptic, obtuse or mucronate, reaching 12 cm x 4 cm, with 5-6 lateral veins arranged in arcs ending at the tip of the following vein and linked together by a network of smaller veins producing a polygonal pattern on the lower side of

the leaf, veins protruding on the lower face; white veins very conspicuous on the upper side, contrasting with the green of the leaf blade.



#### **Aizen flowers Fruit and leaves of aizen**

Flowers have a tiny pedicel, hairy, greenish-white with four valvular, hairy sepals, no petals, 6-20 free stamens inserted at the base of a short gynophorum inside a thick disc sometimes somewhat fringed; sweetly fragrant, ovary ovoid with very short style and only one loculum with many ovules. Fruit a spherical berry, 1.5 (1.2) cm in diameter, yellow when mature, shortly sessile, clustered in small bunches (with usually 2-3 fruits only), slightly but not always hairy; epicarp crustaceous; pulp translucent, of jelly-like texture, sweet.



**Senegalese woman with her harvest of aizen fruits**

Seeds 1-4, ventrally flattened, greenish when mature.

**Utilization:**

Ripe aizen fruits contain a delicious sweet jelly that surrounds the seeds. This jelly is consumed directly. The jelly can also be made into syrup. In Sudan, the fruits are fermented to make a beer. The fruits are also sold in the local market



**Aizen seeds Bread and cookies made from seeds**

Aizen seeds are also eaten but of course after soaking in water and removing the bitter element. These are an important food in Senegal. These seeds are quite nutritive and contain about 25 per cent protein and 60 per cent carbohydrates. These are a good source of zinc and iron. The seeds are used in stews, soups, and porridges. They can also be dried again and ground to yield flour that is then used in a variety of bakery products.

**Cultivation:**

Aizen shrubs grow wild and have not been domesticated yet in spite of their being an important source of food. So there is no information available yet on its multiplication and culture. However, work should be initiated on the domestication of this fruit.

[http://www.fruitipedia.com/aizen\\_boscia\\_senegalensis.htm](http://www.fruitipedia.com/aizen_boscia_senegalensis.htm)