

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*)

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Each person born in the tropics has a story to tell about the tamarind. As tamarind season approaches on the Eastern plains (“llanos orientales”) of Colombia, women make “tamarindada” or tamarind juice to offer the thirsty farmers following an intense day of work. In Trinidad and Jamaica, tamarind is a popular refreshing snack. Asians, particularly in Thailand and India, have a long tradition of eating and cooking with tamarind-creating delicious salsas, chutneys and sauces. The tamarind fruit “pod” is smooth, and brittle to the touch; inside the pasty flesh clings tightly to the hardened dark-brown seeds. The tamarind tree grows easily in South Florida and requires little care. The fruiting season in Florida is February to May and tamarind paste is available year-round in Asian specialty stores.



Chicken in Spiced Tamarind Salsa (Serves 4)



Marinate the chicken:

- 4 chicken breasts
- ½ teaspoon white onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped fine for garnish
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch pepper

Tamarind salsa:

- 1 cup of tamarind juice (10 tamarinds)
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 pinch fresh ginger, grated
- 1/8 cup red onion, diced
- 2 green chilies, seeded and diced
- 1 teaspoon cumin seed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar

Mash 10 tamarinds and soak in water overnight. In the morning, strain through a colander, collecting the juice. Discard seeds and skin. Heat the butter, salt, onions and chilies in a saucepan over medium heat until soft. Add the tamarind and remaining ingredients and stir constantly until slightly reddish brown in color. To serve, plate the marinated chicken and spoon tamarind salsa over tops.

Sweet Chutney Tamarind



Ingredients:

- 2 cup of tamarind Pulp (30 tamarinds pale and remove the seeds)
- 4 tsp. Allspice seeds (cinnamon, cumin, mustard, paper)
- 8 ounces (1 1/2 cups) brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 fresh green jalapenos – quartered
- 2 large onions- diced
- 3 tsp. de mash garlic
- 1 cup dark raisins

Tamarind: peeled, and seeded. Place all ingredients in heavy saucepan over medium heat. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand for about 12 hours. Serve it with crackers or any meat.