

## Mango Varieties: A Comprehensive Overview

Asif Khan Pathan

Department of Horticulture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad

### Introduction

The mango (*Mangifera indica*) is one of the most popular and widely cultivated fruits across the globe. Known as the "king of fruits," it holds a special place in the hearts of millions due to its sweet, juicy flavor, and nutritional benefits. Over the centuries, various varieties of mangoes have been developed, each with distinct characteristics in terms of taste, texture, appearance, and adaptability to different climates. Mango cultivation is essential not only for its economic value but also for its cultural significance, particularly in tropical and subtropical regions. This article delves into the various mango varieties, their key characteristics, cultivation areas, and the factors that influence their growth and popularity.

### The History and Origins of Mango Varieties

The mango is believed to have originated in South Asia, specifically in the region that encompasses modern-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, where it has been cultivated for over 4,000 years. Early records suggest that the mango was domesticated and spread across Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and later the world, facilitated by trade routes and migrations. The mango's widespread cultivation and its migration

from tropical Asia to the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East have led to the development of numerous varieties suited to different growing conditions, ranging from the sweet, golden varieties of India to the more fibrous, but equally aromatic types of the Philippines and Latin America.

Today, mangoes are grown in over 100 countries worldwide, with India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines being the leading producers. Over time, different varieties of mango have evolved in response to the diverse climatic and environmental conditions found in these regions. These varieties vary in size, shape, color, taste, and ripening characteristics, creating a broad spectrum of mangoes suited to different culinary uses, from fresh consumption to cooking and processing into juice, chutney, or dried snacks.

### Key Mango Varieties

Mango varieties can be categorized based on their origin, flavor profile, and physical characteristics. While it is difficult to comprehensively list all mango varieties, we will focus on some of the most famous and widely cultivated varieties that have a significant impact on the mango industry.

### 1. Alphonso (Hapus)

The Alphonso mango, also known as Hapus, is one of the most renowned and prized mango varieties in the world, particularly in India. Native to the western state of Maharashtra, Alphonso mangoes are often considered the best due to their rich flavor, smooth texture, and vibrant golden-yellow color. These mangoes are medium to large in size and have a distinct, non-fibrous pulp that is soft, juicy, and extremely aromatic. The Alphonso mango has a balanced sweet-tart flavor, making it ideal for both fresh consumption and for use in a variety of culinary preparations, including smoothies, desserts, and ice creams.

Alphonso mangoes are typically harvested during the summer months (from April to June) and are highly valued for their premium quality. Due to their popularity, Alphonso mangoes are exported worldwide, particularly to markets in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. The distinctive aroma and rich flavor have earned Alphonso mangoes the title of "the king of mangoes," making it one of the most coveted varieties for connoisseurs of the fruit.

### 2. Kesar

Kesar mangoes are another popular variety that is primarily grown in the state of Gujarat, India. Often referred to as the "queen of mangoes," Kesar mangoes are known for their rich, sweet flavor and vibrant saffron-colored skin, which gives them their name ("kesar" means saffron in Hindi). These

mangoes are small to medium-sized, with a firm, non-fibrous flesh that has a perfect balance of sweetness and acidity. Kesar mangoes are highly sought after for their flavor and are often consumed fresh, used in juices, or turned into jams and desserts.

Like the Alphonso, Kesar mangoes are also harvested during the summer months, and their distinct flavor profile makes them a favorite among mango enthusiasts. The state of Gujarat, particularly the areas around the Girnar hills, is known for producing the best-quality Kesar mangoes. As with Alphonso mangoes, Kesar varieties are also exported globally, particularly to the Middle East, the United States, and Europe.

### 3. Langra

The Langra mango is another popular variety, widely grown in the northern and eastern regions of India. Known for its distinct greenish-yellow skin and unique flavor, the Langra mango is medium to large in size and has a firm, fibrous texture. It is slightly tart, with a sweet undertone, making it ideal for both eating fresh and for use in chutneys, pickles, and other culinary applications.

Langra mangoes are harvested during the early summer months, typically in May and June. The variety is commonly found in regions like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and parts of West Bengal. Despite its fibrous texture, Langra mangoes are beloved for their bold taste, and their availability in local markets has made them a popular variety among mango lovers in India.

#### 4. Dasherri

The Dasherri mango is a famous variety grown primarily in the northern parts of India and Pakistan. Known for its elongated shape and vibrant greenish-yellow skin, Dasherri mangoes are medium to large-sized and possess a sweet, tangy flavor. The flesh is firm, juicy, and has a slight fiber content, making it a versatile mango suitable for fresh consumption, juices, and chutneys.

Dasherri mangoes are harvested from May to July and are a favorite in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab. This variety is also prized for its ability to be used in various culinary applications, particularly in making traditional mango pickles, which are a staple in Indian cuisine. Dasherri mangoes are also a favorite for export to international markets.

#### 5. Totapuri

Totapuri mangoes are widely grown in southern India and parts of Sri Lanka. This variety is known for its distinctive parrot-beak shape, which is where it gets its name (totapuri means "parrot's beak" in Hindi). Totapuri mangoes are medium to large in size, with a thick skin that is primarily green, with a tinge of red when ripe. The flesh is slightly fibrous, with a tangy-sweet flavor that is less rich compared to varieties like Alphonso or Kesar.

Totapuri mangoes are harvested in the early summer months and are commonly consumed fresh, used in juices, or processed for various products such as mango pulp and chutney. They are particularly popular in the

southern states of India, including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Totapuri mangoes are also a key ingredient in the production of mango pulp, which is exported globally for use in processed food products.

#### 6. Himsagar

Himsagar is a medium-sized mango variety that is predominantly grown in West Bengal and Orissa. It is known for its smooth, non-fibrous texture and sweet, fragrant flavor. The skin is usually yellow with a slight blush of red when ripe, and the flesh is succulent and fiberless, making it a favorite for fresh consumption.

Himsagar mangoes are harvested during the summer months, particularly in May and June. This variety is highly prized in the eastern regions of India, where it is often enjoyed as a fresh fruit or used to make mango-based desserts and beverages. Himsagar mangoes are also gaining recognition in international markets, particularly in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States, where there is a growing demand for high-quality mangoes.

#### 7. Sindhri

Sindhri is one of the earliest varieties of mangoes to be harvested each year, typically available in late April and May. This variety is widely grown in the Punjab region of Pakistan and is one of the most well-known mango varieties in South Asia. Sindhri mangoes are medium-sized, with a golden yellow skin when ripe, and a sweet, rich

flavor. The flesh is smooth, juicy, and almost fiberless, making it a favorite for eating fresh.

Sindhri mangoes are prized for their early availability in the mango season and are a popular variety in both domestic and international markets. They are commonly exported to the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and the United States, where they are in high demand during the early summer months.

#### 8. Palmer

The Palmer mango is a variety that is widely cultivated in the Americas, particularly in the United States, Central America, and the Caribbean. It is a large mango variety with a smooth, reddish-purple skin when ripe and a firm, fibrous flesh. The flavor is mildly sweet, with a slight tanginess. Palmer mangoes are typically used for fresh consumption and are popular in salads and smoothies.

The Palmer mango is known for its extended shelf life and is often exported to various countries, including Canada, the United States, and Europe. This variety is also grown in tropical and subtropical regions outside of India, particularly in countries like Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela.

### **Mango Varieties and Their Economic Significance**

Mangoes play a crucial role in the economy of many tropical and subtropical countries, especially in India, where the mango industry is valued in billions of dollars. The variety of mangoes cultivated, both for domestic

consumption and export, has a direct impact on the economic health of the agricultural sector in these regions.

India is the largest producer and exporter of mangoes, and the demand for various varieties continues to rise both domestically and internationally. Mangoes such as Alphonso, Kesar, and Langra have achieved international recognition for their quality, leading to an increase in their export to global markets. Mango exports contribute significantly to India's agricultural export revenue, with the United States, the European Union, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia being key destinations for Indian mangoes.

In addition to being a valuable agricultural product, mangoes also contribute to food processing industries. Mango pulp is widely used in the production of beverages, ice creams, jams, chutneys, and other processed food products. The popularity of mango-based products in global markets has led to increased demand for mangoes from commercial orchards, further boosting the economic value of mango cultivation.

### **Conclusion**

Mangoes, with their diverse varieties and rich flavors, hold a special place in global agriculture. From the creamy Alphonso to the tangy Totapuri, each variety offers unique characteristics that appeal to different consumer tastes and preferences. Mango cultivation supports the economies of several tropical and subtropical countries, providing livelihood to millions of farmers and workers

in the agricultural sector. With the ongoing popularity of mangoes in global markets, the demand for different varieties is expected to continue growing. As such, the study and development of new mango varieties, along with the promotion of sustainable farming practices, will be key to ensuring the continued success of mango cultivation in the years to come.

### References

Chakraborty, M., & Banerjee, M. (2017). Mango cultivars in India: A review of their growth, characteristics, and distribution. *Indian Journal of Horticulture*, 74(4), 512-520.

Ahmed, M., & Ali, M. (2016). *Mango: The King of Fruits*. Springer.

Malusare, P., & Pawar, D. (2018). Mango varieties and their commercial cultivation in India. *International Journal of Agriculture Sciences*, 10(9), 4587-4591.

Sahu, M., & Pal, A. (2019). Mango Varieties and Their Economic Importance in India. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 34(3), 225-230.

Kumar, S., & Gupta, R. (2015). Mango cultivation: Varieties and their agronomic practices. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Research*, 49(2), 125-132.