SUMMER means fruits and the first one I can think of is mango. My taste buds immediately react to this word and the urge for a bite of this juicy summer fruit becomes sweetly intolerable. Well, I am satisfying my taste buds while writing this article. In the previous summer issue my fellow coordinators have talked about summer fashion, summer drinks, but it would be a shame if we don’t talk about mangoes, considered the ‘King of fruits’, ruling over summer.

The mango is one of the most cultivated fruits in tropics. Native to South Asia and is the national fruit of not only India but also Pakistan and Philippines. You wouldn’t have known that 500 named varieties of mangoes have evolved in India. Some might be duplicates with different names, but at least 350 are propagated in commercial nurseries. Different kinds of mangoes are cultivated throughout the season. They are classified as early, early to mid season, mid season, mid to late season and late season. The notable mangoes of the early season are Bombay Yellow, Malda, Pari, Suldar Pasand and Suvarnarekha also known as Sundri. Langra and Rajapuri mangoes are cultivated early to mid season. In the mid-season, Alampur Baneshan, Alphonso, Bangalora, Banganapally, Duschri, Gulab Khas and Zardalu mangoes are cultivated. Rumani, Samarbehist, Vanraj and Neelum are in the latter half of the mid-season crop.

Fazli malda is seen during the late season. In India, mangoes are widely used in different types of cuisines. Chutneys, athanu and pickles are made with sour unripe mangoes in almost every house. Some eat them raw with salt, chilli or soy sauce. Aam panna, one of the most refreshing drinks during the summer, is also made from roasted raw mangoes. Mango shake is also a popular drink among most teenagers as one can often spot a group of teenagers chatting in a café over cool mango shakes topped with vanilla ice cream. Indians, especially Bengalis, have a penchant for their national fruit and I am no exception. Well, I’m off to indulge in some more of these delicacies right now and hope you will too after reading this article.

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