

Baobab – african tree of life



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The name " Tree of life" was formed because of Baobab's many uses medicinally, almost every part of it, was used for healing purposes. In traditional African medicine, baobab fruit is used for treating inflammation, fevers, asthma, gastric complaints, malaria, haemoptysis, smallpox and as a general health tonic, particularly in children, pregnant women and the elderly people. Baobab health benefits include both support of prostate health and general health benefits, largely because of its extraordinary levels of vitamin C.

The baobab fruit also provides a high level of bone-building calcium, about twice the amount found in milk. Baobab is the fruit of the *Adansonia digitata* tree, also referred to as the upside down tree, bottle tree, or monkey bread tree. The tree grows mainly in Madagascar, South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. Among native peoples, the baobab fruit is valued highly as a food. Scientific investigation has shown that the fruit is a rich source of several nutrients, which is likely part of the reason for baobab health benefits.

Baobab Nutritional Value Specifically, baobab has six times the vitamin C of oranges, twice the calcium level of milk, and high levels of potassium, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus. Baobab fruit also provides a good source of fiber, protein, and probiotic activity, as it stimulates good bacteria in the gut. Ten grams of baobab dried fruit pulp contains 5 grams of fiber, which is comparable to the amount of fiber in one standard dose of psyllium taken as a laxative.

Baobab fruit consists of seeds, pulp, and red fibers, all encased in a very hard shell. Dried baobab fruit pulp is used to make nutritional supplements, and the seeds and red fibers are used to make extract oil, which is used for dry skin. Baobab has an ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity; i. e. , its antioxidant power) value twice that of cranberries and pomegranate and greater than the berries (e. g. , blueberries, blackberries, raspberries).

A 2009 study published in Food Science and Nutrition reported on an analysis of the composition and nutritional value of baobab fruit. The researchers noted that baobab pulp is especially rich in vitamin C while the leaves are an excellent source of calcium and a good source of proteins. (Chadare 2009) Baobab extracts have been shown to have antiviral activity against herpes simplex virus. A study of 10 species of Togolese medicinal plants found that the root bark and leaf extracts of baobab were the most potent of the group.