



# Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*)

- Baobab is one of the most nutritious fruits in the world
- The fruit pulp has 5x the vitamin C of orange, and is also rich in calcium. Baobab fruit pulp can be sold locally and internationally
- Baobab trees bring many benefits to people and the environment and should be conserved and cultivated on farms

## Conservation of trees

### General information and why should we maintain the trees?

- In Kenya, baobab is naturally found along the whole Coast and in drier lowland areas around Kibwezi/ Makueni/ Voi/ Kitui. Baobab is usually ready for harvest from November to February but the fruits can be stored in a dry, cool and clean storage place for up to one year.
- Baobab trees (as all other trees) provide ecological services such as shade, soil health/quality, micro-climate, habitat for wild animals, climate change mitigation,
- Baobab trees are of cultural relevance as they are symbolic/iconic African trees, they beautify the landscape, represent cultural heritage and maintain African traditions + beliefs + knowledge
- Baobab products are an important source of nutrition for local communities, but there is also increasing interest and demand for baobab pulp in Europe and USA where it is considered a very healthy 'superfruit'
- Baobab products are a source of income generation, particularly after value addition

## Nutrition

### What are nutrients and why are they important?

- Nutrients are the nutritious components in foods that the body needs to grow strong and healthy. A diverse and balanced diet contains a range of nutrients.
- Eating Baobab pulp is very valuable for nutrition and health of both children and adults. Fresh or processed Baobab can be eaten regularly.
- Baobab pulp is extremely rich in vitamin C. Vitamin C strengthens the immune system and provides for good health. Vitamin C can help healing wounds and reduce the occurrence of colds and flu.
- Did you know that baobab pulp has five times the amount of vitamin C as compared with orange?
- Every person should eat a minimum of 45mg of vitamin C every day. This amount of vitamin C is available from 20gm of baobab pulp. This is two tablespoons of baobab pulp
- In addition, baobab pulp is a very rich source of calcium. Calcium helps to build strong bones and teeth and supports the muscles systems in the body. Calcium is very important for children's growth and healthy development.
- Did you know that baobab pulp has more than two times the amount of calcium as milk?
- In addition to vitamin C and calcium, and many more nutrients in Baobab pulp, it also contains easily available food energy for boosting an active lifestyle.





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- Did you know that the baobab leaves are used in Western Africa as a vegetable and for making sauce? The leaves of baobab are very rich in protein and iron. Protein is good for developing strong body and iron increases the quality of blood. Baobab leaves can be eaten raw or cooked as a substitute for jute mallow, as they have a similar texture once cooked. The baobab seeds are also edible and are rich in a healthy oil.

### Products, value addition and income generation

- Baobab can be eaten directly, but it can also be made into many nice and tasty products such as porridge, juice and 'mabuyu' (sweets)
- Baobab pulp can be added to any porridge ('uji') for better taste and extra nutrition. Easy preparation of the pulp can be done by putting the baobab seeds into a clean, empty water bottle, add some clean water and shake the bottle until the pulp has been removed from the seeds (the seeds will appear brown). The content of the water bottle is then sieved into the porridge. Important to know is that the baobab should only be added to the porridge once it has been cooked and is ready to eat. This will help to not destroy the vitamin C during cooking.
- The same bottle method for preparing the baobab pulp can be used to make a delicious and refreshing juice. To add sweetness to the juice, some small amount of sugar or honey can be added for taste. This can be served to children once a day together with meals for improving their health.
- If you are interested in income generation, why not think about making mabuyu sweets. It is easy to make mabuyu. You only need fresh baobab seeds covered in the white pulp, some sugar, some food colouring if needed, some pili-pili (chilli) if desired for taste. First the sugar is dissolved in a small bit of clean water together and heated together with the food colouring and pili pili, stir continuously and cook until ready. Remove from the fire/heat. Then you add the fresh baobab seeds to the mixture and stir until all seeds have been covered and set aside for cooling. Finally pack the mabuyu into clean plastic bags for sale.

### On-going research

- ICRAF and partners are further supporting the planting and use of baobab. One topic is breeding and grafting of baobabs for better trees that can grow faster and provide more fruits sooner after planting. This goes hand in hand with strengthening market connections for farmers and developing novel baobab food products for local and international markets.

### Conservation/ keeping baobabs in the landscape

- To make full use of the benefits that baobab (and tamarind) can provide, such as nutrition, food and income, it is necessary to maintain and conserve these iconic and valuable African trees in your fields and forests.



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