

A Tale of Papaya:Rags to Riches

By : Juggernaut

Papaya is not a poor's man fruit anymore.



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A Tale of Papaya

Subba Rao

“ You don’t sell papaya?”

“ No, only apples and grapes,” “ you keep walking to the end of the line, you may find papayas,” said the woman vendor in the daily market without even making an eye contact with Juggernaut standing face to face with her. The fruit vendors in the daily market are of totally a different breed; they look, dress and speak different from rest of the local population. They are the descendents of an old immigrant group from a neighboring state. It’s hard to understand their vocabulary and any attempt to bargain their prices down would only results in either verbal or even physical assault. So nobody dare bargain with them; you take or leave it for your own safety.

In hot sun and air filled with odor of rotten fruits, Juggernaut walked slowly by-passing other vendors selling oranges, pomegranates, mangoes, pineapples, bananas, gooseberries, Jack Fruits and other fruits then found at last a papaya vendor. “ How come you were at the back of the market?”

“ Only poor people buys papaya for a small price so we can only afford cheap stalls at the end of the line,” pondered the old woman vendor protecting herself from hot Sun with a large umbrella made from dried palm leaves.

The fruit vendor stalls begin with Apple and grape at the front of the market place followed by orange and mango, and ends with papaya at the back of the market as if it followed a natural order; rich in the front and poor at the back. But, this was some decades ago.

But now, there is no wasteland left in the country for papaya trees to grow wild with plentiful cheap papaya. Papaya is cultivated in fruit orchards like other fruits and with prices comparable with other orchard fruits are now sold for a premiere price. Papaya is now wrapped in a special paper and sold by weight along with apples and grapes in the same fruit stall at the front of the marker. “ I would rather walk to the back of the market and buy cheap papaya than at the front of the market for an exorbitant price,” complained Juggernaut rather loudly while buying a fully ripe papaya wrapped in a fancy paper.

“ Not everybody is crazy about my aroma but pound per pound; I provide more quality nutrients than apples, grapes or any other fruit in the market; seeds inside me when dried are as good spice as black pepper; tender leaves from my tree when cooked tastes like spinach with a special flavor; when I am green, enzymes in me can tenderize any tough meat; which fruit can boast all these benefits?” “ Don’t get cheap on me Juggernaut pay up from your deep pockets, at last I got the respect I deserve,” papaya shouted back from inside the wrap.

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