



Mighty Moringa “Mother’s best friend,” “never die,” “drumstick tree”—moringa takes many names around the world. For centuries a traditional remedy for skin, respiratory, digestive, and other ailments, it’s now being hailed as a way to battle famine and malnutrition. With vitamin-and-mineral-packed leaves, the drought-resistant tree also grows fast—up to 12 feet in a season.

From spicy seeds to bitter leaves (often ground into a powder), most of *Moringa oleifera* can be eaten or used, says Jed Fahey of Johns Hopkins. Its seeds, crushed, can even help purify water. Although animal studies support anecdotal evidence of its medicinal benefits, more human trials are needed, Fahey notes. Meanwhile, the “miracle tree” is catching on in impoverished areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, entering local dishes and lore. —Luna Shyr

A native of the Indian subcontinent, the moringa tree has highly nutritious leaves, shaped here from dried leaf powder.

Gram for gram, dried moringa leaves have

- 25 × iron in spinach
- 17 × calcium in milk
- 15 × potassium in bananas
- 10 × vitamin A in carrots
- 9 × protein in yogurt