

Hold Your Nose for the Durian Fruit



By Joe Schwarcz — August 22, 2019



Photo courtesy: McGill University [1]

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The durian grows mostly in southeast Asia where it is referred to as “The King of Fruit.” The only problem is that the king needs a bath.

While people speak in exalted terms about the taste of the durian, they admit that its fragrance brings up memories of a public toilet in which the sewer has backed up. “Durian is an Indonesian word and derives from “duri,” which translates as thorn. Indeed, the “durian” is a thorny fruit in more ways than one. It is about the size of a large cantaloupe and is shaped like a football and its hard shell is covered with rough, sharp spikes. Let’s just say that when a durian falls from a tree, you don’t want to be standing under it. But eating it is a different matter.

It seems that a ripe, well-chosen durian is exquisite. The choosing, however, should be done by an expert known as a “tukang durian,” who is installed in a roadside stall with a few chairs. The taste is often described like that of an exotic raspberry, albeit one that is consumed in a toilet. Durians smell so bad that they are banned from airplanes, hotels, and public transport. Devotees, believe it or not, are not turned off by the smell and supposedly are turned on by the taste.

Legend has it that the durian has aphrodisiac properties, hence the expression, “when the durians are down, the sarongs are up.”

The original McGill University OSS post can be [found here](#) [2].

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Links

[1] https://mcgill.ca/oss/article/food/if-you-can-endure-smell?utm_source=OSS%20Newsletter&utm_campaign=d0a8cfdbca-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_5_3_2019_14_30_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_995459bc2b-d0a8cfdbca-110447323

[2] https://mcgill.ca/oss/article/food/if-you-can-endure-smell?utm_source=OSS+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d0a8cfdbca-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_5_3_2019_14_30_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_995459bc2b-d0a8cfdbca-110447323