



# PINEAPPLE TALKING POINTS

## 2. A Slice of Pineapple History

- The history and origin of the pineapple is not perfectly clear but newer studies suggest that **the pineapple was first grown in Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela.**
- The leaves of pineapple plants are so sharp that they have been used by native cultures as a fence.
- Indians of South America distributed the pineapple throughout other parts of tropical America and up to the Caribbean.
- Columbus took the sweet fruit back to Europe in 1493.
- From there the fruit went to out to the Pacific islands, India, and Africa during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- It was not until 1885 in Oahu, Hawaii that the first pineapple plantation was started. Until the 1960's Hawaii produced most of the world's pineapples.
- Now Southeast Asia produces the majority of the world's pineapples.

## 3. How Do Pineapples Grow?

- The pineapple plant is an herbaceous monocot.
- It grows 2-4 feet tall and 3-4 feet wide. The leaves have spines at the tips and margins, except the Smooth Cayenne kind. The plant has lateral shoots that help propagate the next crop.
- **Hummingbirds are the natural pollinator of the fruit.**
- The fruit is a combination of multiple berries fused together. The flower ovaries fuse together and form the fruit.
- There is a core to the fruit that is very fibrous some people like it but it can be difficult to eat. The outside cover of the fruit is a waxy rind that is made up of hexagonal "eyes" which are where the original flowers were.
- There is one fruit produced per plant, it takes roughly six months from pollinating to harvest.
- Pineapples grow best in well-drained sandy soils. Pineapples are grown in hot, tropical climates with temperatures above 65°F.
- There are a few popular varieties: Smooth Cayenne- a flavorful variety that is seedless and lacks spines on the leaves, selected by the Venezuelan Indians; Queen- grown in South Africa and Australia; Spanish- second most popular variety that is grown in the Caribbean; Abacaxi and Maipure- grown in tropical America.

## 4. What Season do we pick Pineapples?

- Because **pineapples grow in tropical climates and they can withstand both wet and dry seasons there is not one particular season in which pineapples grow.**
- However, depending on how you plant the plant, it will take varying times before the first fruit can be harvested.
- The tops of plants take two years, slips take about one year to produce fruit, and suckers take 18 months.

## 5. Reasons to Eat Pineapples

- Fresh pineapple is the only known source of **bromelain**, which is an enzyme that has anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Potassium** and **iron** are found in pineapples. Potassium is necessary for proper functioning of the heart, kidneys, muscles, nerves, and digestive system.
- Iron is essential to the body because it helps transport oxygen to all the body's cells.
- **Vitamin C** is used in keeping the body healthy and keeping the common cold away. Also, iron is more readily absorbed when the body has enough vitamin C.
- **Manganese** is used to keep bones strong and avoid osteoporosis.
- **Fiber** is good for the body because it makes you feel full longer and it stays in your stomach longer helping you absorb more water.

## 6. How do you pick a good Pineapple?

- **Pineapples are ready to eat when you pull on a leaf and it releases easily.**
- The pineapple should have a sweet smell.
- The outside color will also change from green to yellow.
- Harvest of pineapples is done by hand for fresh market and some plantations use machines to harvest pineapples that will be used for canning.
- Pineapple should not be stored in the fridge before it has been cut up.
- The fruit should look fresh and avoid fruit that has brown leaves or bruised, soft spots on it.

## Fun Facts:

- Some say the top of the pineapple looks like a royal crown and others say it looks like the feathers of the mythical Phoenix bird.
- In Taiwanese the pronunciation of the word pineapple sounds like a blessing of good fortune and future prosperity.
- People decorate their homes and offices with pineapples as a symbol of luck, so that one's efforts will come to fruition.
- In some cultures the pineapple is known as one of the best gifts for a house warming party or the opening of a new business.
- Pineapples have an enzyme in them, like kiwi and papaya, that when used with meats will make the meat more tender. This enzyme is no longer active after it has been heated so canned varieties will not have this same property.