

WORLD COCONUT DAY

- D.K.Hari & D.K.Hema Hari

Coconut and human head

Coconut has been close to man from ancient times. The word Coconut is derived from Portuguese word, coco, meaning a human head. This is because, the three indentations on a Coconut shell resembles a human head. Also, the coconut water is very similar to the human blood plasma.



Nara and Narakela

Nara – human

Coconut is known as Narakela in Samskrt and as Nariyal in Hindi. Nara means a human in the same language. Thus the words Narakela, Nariyal are etymologically similar to Nara, man.

In this land, Coconut has an inner significance relating to man.

Have you ever wondered why Coconuts are broken on auspicious occasions?

The Coconut represents the human body and ego. Only when the ego is broken, the pureness in us, which is innate to us, comes out to the open. This goodness is a resplendent, pure, sweet succor to life and is symbolized by the white and sweet kernel inside the Coconut. Breaking the Coconut is akin to symbolically breaking the "Ahankaram", ego, the total surrender and merging with the Divine.

Nara - Water

Nara is also a word used to denote water. The Divinity who is depicted as resting on causal waters is known as Narayana, Nara

meaning water, and Ayana meaning "to dwell".

The word Narika is also used as an adjective to denote watery or aqueous. The Coconut, which gives us the tender Coconut water, is known as Narikela, a connotation that is linked to water, Nara.



The Coconut trees are mostly known to grow near water bodies, and are abundant near coastal areas.



"Probably", the coconut grows in coastal regions because it is useful for shipping. It preserves nutritious water and food. The rope of its fibre doesn't rot in water and it can serve as life-boat when the ship drowns.

Varieties of Coconut

There are basically two varieties of Coconut, namely, the Tall variety and the Dwarf variety.

There are nutritious, tasty, succulent varieties of coconut all across the world. Each variety of Coconut is a Nature given delicacy. It is a World fruit.



Some of the common varieties of Coconut

1. West coast Tall - India
2. East Coast Tall - India
3. Chandrakalpa-Lakshadweep ordinary-India

4. Andaman Ordinary
5. Philippines Ordinary
6. King Cambodia
7. Malaysian Pandian Coconut



India, among largest Producers

India is among the largest producers of Coconut and had ranked third among the top five Coconut producers in 2014.

Country	Production
Indonesia	19.1
Philippines	14.7
India	11.1
Brazil	2.9
Sri Lanka	2.2

The Indian states well known for Coconut cultivation include, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Orissa. The main reason being the proximity of these states to coastal India.

Kera – Kerala – Land of Coconuts

Of all states, Kerala has the largest number of Coconut trees. Kera, means Coconut. Kerala means, "Land of Coconut". Thus we have an Indian state named after Coconut.



A Kalpavriksha

Every part of the Coconut tree can be used by humans in some way or the other, which makes it one of the most versatile of Flora.



Whether be its water, which is a delicious drink, and in its dried form can produce oil;

or its husk, which is used for making ropes; or its leaves used to make huts; or its trunk which can used to build a boat and other furniture; or its shell used for creating cosmetics, Coconut has a variety of utility. It is verily an industry by itself.

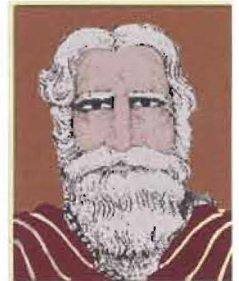
The one of the other names of a Coconut tree in Samskrt is Kalpavriksha, meaning "Wish Fulfilling Tree".

Verily a Meal

The tender Coconut is a wholesome food. It is a drink, a mini meal, a bowl and also a spoon. When we have the tender Coconut, we first drink its sweet water. Then we scoop the inner pulp in the Coconut shell using a slice of the fibrous husk as a scoop spoon.

The Pulp of a Coconut fruit can be eaten either raw or cooked, and is rich in vitamins and minerals.

Sushruta, the ancient Indian Ayurveda surgeon says that coconut is good for *hrudaya*, heart and calls Coconut a Cardiac tonic.



The Sushruta Samhita recommends Coconut for increasing the strength of people who suffer from debilitating disease, for a Coconut provides instant energy and improves muscular performance.

Versatility of Coconut as food

Coconut's versatility as food is incredible. It can be mixed with salt as well as sweet. It can be used as vegetable and mixed with rice and other food items. It can be used to make milk, which in turn can be used to prepare coconut rice. Coconut oil is used in cooking.

Coconut Delicacies

Coconut milk which is made by grating the inner pulp of a Coconut, is a substitute for the ordinary milk. It is a traditional form of drink in countries such as Indonesia, China and Taiwan.



Coconut rice is a rice cooked in Coconut milk, and is consumed in Caribbean, Indonesia and Malaysia.



Coconut Pudding

Coconut pudding is another delicious item, made from Coconut.

Coconut sweet

There are also a variety of sweet

items made from Coconut. The Coconut shaving jaggery is a timeless sweet.



Coconut Water

Coconut water apart from being a delicious, is a healthy drink. It contains bioactive enzymes, which aid digestion. It is also one of those drinks that helps in rehydrating the body.

Tender Coconut Water

We have seen earlier that Coconut is good for heart. Many researches have shown that Coconut water is similar to blood plasma and can be



safely injected directly into the bloodstream.

Coconut water was given intravenously to people during

World War -2 when regular IV solution was in short supply. This was done both by British in Sri Lanka and by Japanese in Sumantra.

In one of the recent cases in medical history, involved a man in the Solomon Islands, who had suffered a stroke, and was transfused with Coconut water due to an emergency.

Coconut Oil

The Coconut oil is rich in vitamin B and other fat soluble Vitamins like A, D, E, K, Beta Carotene and some amino acids, and is used in cooking.

Oil/Fat	RangeParts per Million
Coconut	5-24
Palm Kernel	9-40
Sunflower	8-44
Plam	13-19
Soy	20-35
Cottonseed	28-108
Rapeseed	25-80
Corn	18-95
Beef Tallow	800-1400
Butter	2200-4100
Lard	3000-4000

In 1960s, in an experiment on hydrogenated oil, some vested interests came up with the find that

Coconut is bad for health and that the olive oil the better option.

For thousands of years Coconut oil has been consumed, across population and across lands, by the healthy. It nourished mankind in 93 countries for over 3,000 years.

Then how could it suddenly turn unhealthy? This suspicion about Coconut oil was infact a creation of the olive oil lobby, for promoting their Olive Oil.



In the last decade, further studies by research organizations have identified the healthy attributes of Coconut oil.

In December 2002, American Oil Chemists Society in their published research stated that Coconut oil helps in nutrient absorption, as it facilitates absorption of minerals, like calcium and magnesium, and thus preventing osteoporosis.



Recent studies have shown that coconut oil is more effective than insect repellents. The coconut oil fatty acids provide 90% repellency against mosquitoes.

Coconut Ash

The ashes of few varieties of Coconut, those from a Homa have wonderful medicinal values.

Other uses

There are a variety of other uses from the different parts of a Coconut tree. Some of them being,

1. The intertwined leaves of a Coconut tree are a cool roofing material for thatched huts.
2. The mid stem of the Coconut tree is used for making sweeping brooms.
3. The Coconut shell is used for making cosmetics.
4. Coir, the Coconut fiber, derived from its husk, is used for making carpets.
5. The coconut trunk is used for making boats.
6. The root of a Coconut tree attracts micro-organisms which act on dirty water

and cleanse the water. This natural process of cleansing the water is now given the term Root Zone Treatment (RTZ).

Nariyal Purnima

Nariyal Purnima is a festival named after Nariyal, Coconut when Varuna, the Divinity of Oceans and Seas is worshipped.

One thing about Coconut is that it floats on water, and is carried to different places, where it germinates. Coconuts can travel hundreds of miles floating the sea. This is how the coconut trees spread everywhere. So we see a distinct connect between Varuna, the Divinity of Waters and Coconut - Narikela - Nariyal - Nara - Water. The way Coconut traverses across seas and water bodies to different parts of the world establishes this bond.

Coconut floating in water



This bond between Coconut and water is revealed on Nariyal Purnima day, when people offer Coconuts to rivers, oceans and other bodies, while propitiating Lord Varuna.

World Coconut Day

World Coconut Day is observed every year on September 2nd. This day was designated by the Asia and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC), based in Jakarta, Indonesia, whose foundation day falls on September 2nd. India being a member of APCC, celebrates this day.

A day to create awareness on the importance of this Kalpavriksha, and its potential to facilitate development, due to its multiple and varied uses.

