

Ficus benghalensis* L.*Family: Moraceae**

Talking about the plants of India is incomplete without the mention of the Banyan tree. The great Banyan is a personality in itself for its grandiose presence and versatile support it extends to the ecosystem. Banyan fruit, in the true sense of its inflorescence (aka Syconia), is a vital food resource for birds, small mammals, and rodents. However, we the humans are not left behind. The enticingly soft-red banyan fruit has a wide range of takers across the communities. In the central Indian plateau and eastern region (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Bihar), Banyan fruits popularly known as *Bargad ki phal*, are considered emergency food during the lean period. *Santal*, *Munda*, and *Lodha* community people in Odisha take the fruit as a part of their regular diet. Down the south, fruits are widely consumed by the tribal communities of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. In the northeastern state of Manipur, young buds are boiled with dried fish, potato, peas, and chilis. Tender banyan leaves are also good wrapping materials for steamed items like rice cakes, flour cakes, etc..

