

## Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) – Anacardiaceae

S: Marañón, cajú G: Kaschu, KASHUAPFEL

This evergreen tree is native to northeastern Brazil, where the “fruit” is called cajú. The leaves are spirally arranged and the small flowers are produced in a panicle with male and hermaphroditic flowers. The seeds, called cashew “nuts” (cajú), have to be peeled and roasted before consumption. The fruit is a nut and the seed is surrounded by a double shell containing a caustic phenolic resin, a potent skin irritant toxin, which is used together with the fruit oil against calluses, corns and warts, cancerous ulcers, and even elephantiasis. In Costa Rica the yellowish to reddish fruit stalk, the cashew apple (marañón), is sold widely in markets and roadside fruit stands during the summer season. Marañón is very rich in vitamin C and is highly diuretic and very perishable. The taste is sweet and somewhat astringent due to the high levels of tannic acid. Mixed with sugar the marañón-pasa and a wine is made out of marañón in Costa Rica. In India, the cashew apple is the source of a juicy pulp used to prepare fenny, a locally popular distilled liquor. Today it is widely grown in tropical climates for its seeds and fleshy stalk.



Cashew



Cashew

## Breadfruit tree (*Artocarpus altilis*) – Moraceae

E: Breadfruit tree; breadfruit, breadnut S: Arbol de pan; fruta de pan G: Brotfruchtbaum; Brotfrucht

The breadfruit, a member of the fig family, enjoys considerable popularity in certain parts of the world. This is so for two reasons: firstly, it has always been, and still is, an important staple food. This is especially the case in Polynesia, to which the breadfruit tree is native. Secondly, it played an important historical role in the international export of tropical trees in the 18th century. Saplings of the tree were first transported by the English ship H.M.S. Bounty, on which a mutiny took place in 1787 against Captain William Bligh. (This story was romanticised in The Bounty trilogy by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall (1932), and subsequently made into a film, Mutiny on the Bounty (1935), one of the greatest classic films and nautical adventure stories ever produced, with Charles Laughton and Clark Gable in the main roles. A remake appeared in the 1960s, with Trevor Howard and Marlon Brando). Like the jackfruit, the breadfruit is a compound fruit (syncarp), composed of numerous single, cylindrical fruits, which together form a globose ball, 20–30 cm in diameter, which hangs on a short,



Breadfruit

stout stalk. The syncarps are produced in the axils of leaves near the tops of branches. Variants exist both with and without seeds, and both are commonly used as a vegetable. The seedless form is cut into slices, which are boiled or baked. The soft pulp is rich in carbohydrates. The seeds of the seed-bearing form (“breadnuts”) can also be cooked, and have a pleasant, chestnut-like flavour. Breadfruits are not frequently found in Costa Rica, Polynesia or tropical South or South East Asia, but they are regularly eaten in the Caribbean. The tree is unmistakable, even when no fruit is present. The large, evergreen, deeply incised leaves are highly distinctive.



Breadfruit