Rupa, Manu and their favourite story of Monkey and the Jamun Tree

"Kaal, kaale hain, swaad wale hain, Phalendra Jamun", (black and tasty are these, king of fruits, jamuns), went the fruit seller pushing his fruit cart outside Rupa and Manu's house. Manu loved these dark purple fruits and he ran outside to buy some. He couldn't wait to gobble all of them up and he was about to 'plonk' or spit out the seed of his first jamun when Bantu mama appeared from nowhere, with Rupa tagging behind. "Hey no Manu, don't just throw these seeds away, I need the seeds as I use these seeds powder to keep my blood sugar in control", said Bantu mama.

"Oh, sure, you can have some jamuns as well and then keep the seeds", said Manu graciously, while Rupa quipped in, "Bantu mama, remember that old fable tale about that monkey and the jamun tree, can you please retell the story, that was my favorite story and I enjoyed hearing it again and again". Without losing much time, Bantu mama started the story while Rupa and Manu collected all the jamun seeds for him.

Once upon a time, on the banks of the Yamuna river grew a Jamun tree. A monkey family made this tree, their home. The monkey husband was a friendly fellow. He loved the purple jamun fruit and ate greedily all of it, but he was willing to share it too. Across the banks of the river lived an alligator family. The male crocodile swam across to the bank of the Jamun tree every day to sun himself. The monkey and the alligator became good friends and the alligator ate Jamuns given to him by the monkey.

One day the monkey, seeing the enjoyment of the alligator when he clamped his jaws on the fruit, said, "Alligator, my friend, why don't you take some fruit home for your wife today." "What a good idea", said the alligator. The monkey collected some Jamuns and when the evening darkness deepened, the alligator swam back to his home. His wife ate the fruit. Her eyes slit with enjoyment and her jaws yawned with pleasure. "My husband", she said, "where did you get this tender, sweet fruit?"

The alligator told her about the monkey. Hearing this, the alligator's wife grew silent as she thought. saliva dripped from the corners of her mouth. "If these Jamuns are so sweet," she mused, "how much sweeter would be the heart of one who lives on them." She ordered her husband, "Bring me the monkey tomorrow. I will eat his heart." The alligator was horrified. He tried to remonstrate with his wife but she was adamant. The next day, a tense alligator came to the bank where the Jamun tree stood. "My wife thanks you for the delicious fruit." His eyes avoided the monkey's eyes as he spoke. "She would like to repay your hospitality by inviting you for dinner."

The monkey did not see anything strange in his friend's behaviour. "Certainly," he said. "Let's go. It will make a change from the Jamun fruit." He sat on the alligator's back and the latter pushed himself sluggishly into the water. The journey was a silent one. Half-way through the journey, the monkey looked down and saw the alligator crying, tears streaming out to join the water of the river. "What is it, my friend, what makes you so sad?" he asked concernedly. The alligator replied, "Forgive me, monkey, I have tricked you. My wife is not going to feed you. She desires to eat your heart for she says that it must be as sweet as the Jamun fruit you eat. And I am too scared of her not to bring you. Forgive me."

The monkey gave a little jump of alarm. First he thought that he would plead with the alligator but saw that that would be of no use. So he thought quickly and said, "Oh my, is that all? There is no need to be unhappy, alligator. I will happily give my heart to your wife. What need have monkeys for hearts?" "But", he continued blithely, "unfortunately today is the day that I wash my heart. Early this morning I soaked it in the river and hung it out to dry on the branches of the Jamun tree. Let us go back and collect it."

Alligators are not known for their intelligence. And this one's grief clouded his commonsense even more. Very well", said the alligator, relieved that his friend had taken the news so well. He turned round and the pair headed back to the banks of the tree. As soon as they neared the tree, before the alligator could see that there was no heart drying on its limbs, the monkey leapt and caught a branch. From that day on, the monkey refused to come down from the Jamun tree. But, because he was a generous soul, he threw the fruit down to the alligator who sunned himself on the banks of the river....
Eating jamuns makes your eyes as beautiful as the berries themselves, says an old wives’ tale. Jamun fruits contain almost no sucrose, and are great sources of vitamin C. Ayurveda prescribes the ground up seed of the Jamun as a remedy for diabetes, arthritis and even ageing...

**Botanical Name:** Syzygium cumini  
**Family:** Myrtaceae

**WHAT ARE MY VERNACULAR NAMES?**  
**English:** Java Plum, Black Plum, Indian Blackberry,  
Indian Allspice  
**Hindi:** Jamun, Phalinda  
**Marathi:** Jambhul  
**Tamil:** Naval, Nagai  
**Bengali:** Kalojam, Jam  
**Sanskrit:** Jambu, Phalendra  
**Telugu:** Neredu

**HOW DO I LOOK LIKE?**  
Jamun is an evergreen, tall and shady tree that grows tall and becomes woody very fast. Mature trees of Jamun bear white and tiny flowers that are usually behind broad pendant trees. These gorgeous trees can be found everywhere on the Indian subcontinent. They are absolutely delightful to look at, almost foreign in their appearance, with their rough brown barks, mottled grey branches and luxuriant canopies of glossy green leaves. The biggest delight however, is the abundance of fruit that the trees produce in the early monsoon, staining the tongues of every human, bird and animal that partakes of them, with telltale purple.

Jamun tree has a special significance with the monsoon of the Indian sub-continent. This is the time when big old trees of Jamun whirl in monsoon winds and spread a hint of fragrance in rainy days. The flowering and fruiting varies with the locality, but the general time for the fruit is towards the beginning of the rains. The purple-black fruit of Jamun ripens and is eaten very fondly. The fallen fruit attract a large number of Blue-bottle flies, butterflies, birds and squirrels. The fruits are also eaten by jackals and civets. Industrially, fruits can be made into jams, jellies, juice and puddings.
WHAT ARE MY MEDICINAL USES?
With the onset of rains, come the much loved jamuns. Jamuns have a unique astringent taste. Popularly known as the black plum, the fruit has several beauty benefits to offer. Also, the fruit has medicinal properties, which can treat several ailments. From curing acne and dark spots to indigestion, it does all. So, take a look at a few beauty and health benefits of this super fruit......

FOR DIABETES - Eat jamun daily.
- Boil 250 gms of the fruit in 500 ml water till they are soft. When cool, crush the fruit in the water. Strain and drink 3 times daily.
- Mix 1/2 teaspoon powdered seeds with 1 teaspoon honey once daily in the evening.

FOR BEAUTIFUL SKIN - Jamun is a rich source of iron. It is this iron content which purifies your blood, thereby keeping your skin clean and beautiful. Also, the iron in it helps in increasing the haemoglobin. The fruit is known to cure menstrual problems as well. It is so because the iron content makes up for the blood loss, thus keeping women healthy.

FOR DARK SPOTS - Mix jamun seed powder, lemon powder and gram flour (besan). Add a few drops of almond oil and rose water to this dry mixture. Make a paste out of it. Apply it on your face, and let it stay till it dries off completely. Wash it off with cold water. Follow this routine for at least a month, and you will surely see promising results.

FOR ACNE - Grind some dry jamun seeds and add some cow milk to it. Mix it well. Apply this paste on your pimplles before going to bed. Wash it off the next morning. Apply this regularly for better results.

DENTAL AND GUM INFECTIONS
- Mix ash of jamun leaves and ash of almond shells. Add a little peppermint to make an excellent tooth powder which not only cleans teeth but stops bleeding and relieves gum infections.
- Rub ash of leaves on the teeth and gums. It stops bleeding and makes the teeth strong.
- If you suffer from pyorrhea wash the mouth with a mouthful of jamun juice.

RINGWORM - Diluted juice when applied on the ringworm affected area cures it.

RENA L STONE - Eat the fruit.
- To 10 ml juice add some rock salt. Take 2 times daily.
- Mix 10-15 gms tender leaves add 2-3 black peppercorns. Crush them well. Take 2 times a day.
- Take 1/2 teaspoon powdered seeds with curd daily.
All these will help in breaking the stone and removing it.

WOUNDS - Put 2-3 gms powdered bark on the wound for faster healing.

HAS LOT MANY BENEFITS FOR YOU TO OFFER!!!