

PRODUCTION OF CANNED OIL PALM HEART

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Palm heart or *umbut* has become an exotic mass product mainly used as a salad ingredient in Europe. Normally, the source of palm heart is from coconut tree, but now the palm heart can be collected from oil palm tree. Oil palm hearts are slender, ivory-coloured, delicately flavoured and quite expensive. However, its quality deteriorates quickly if it is not processed immediately. It should be processed on site. This would also reduce transportation cost, which can be expensive.

A simplified method of extracting the heart and processing on site is needed.

EXTRACTION OF OIL PALM HEART

Extraction/collection of oil palm heart is easily done using MAD Auger (extractor). The weight of oil palm heart recovered is around 12-15 kg. Oil palm heart recovery is presented in *Table 1*. After preparation, the edible part is around 10 kg, divided in two parts:

- shoots at the top, 1-2 kg; and
- lower part, between 8-9 kg

The picture of oil palm heart is shown in *Figure 1*.

The main difference in heart weight recovered lies in the amount of fibrous tissue surrounding the heart which, when removed resulted in lower yield (*Figure 2*).

PROCESSING AND CANNING

After having been collected on site, oil palm hearts are delivered to the laboratory. The edible part is extracted and stored under water to avoid oxidation.

The process involves:

- pretreatment of the oil palm heart (to prevent browning);
- cutting into fine fingers;
- blanching;
- canning; and
- sterilizing.



Figure 1. The oil palm heart.

TABLE 1. OIL PALM HEART RECOVERY

Palm	Initial wt (kg)	Heart wt (kg)	Recovery (%)
1	49.0	14.0	28.0
2	48.0	13.5	28.1
3	49.2	12.0	24.4
4	45.5	9.5	20.8



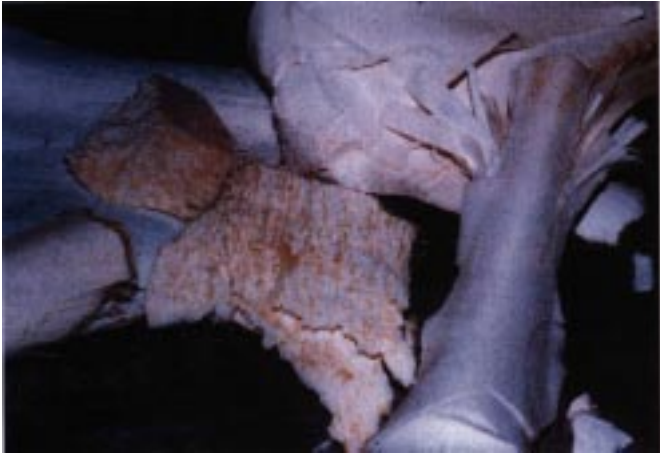


Figure 2. Oil palm heart with inedible fibrous parts.

These trials have shown that the *Elaeis* palm hearts are not only edible but also taste delicious with a rich, creamy flavour and tender texture.

ECONOMIC

The selling price is about RM 1.80 for 450 g can and the estimated French market demand is 22 million of 450 g cans while worldwide demand is 110 million of 450 g cans.

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