

Love What You Love Podcast

Episode 27: Fruit Hunting with Jared Rydelek

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Hey, I'm Julie Rose. Welcome to *Love What You Love*. I'm an author, creator, and enthusiast, and I've always been intrigued by the things that people are super into, so every week I'll introduce you to another fascinating human who's into really interesting stuff.

Welcome back! Or, Welcome! First things first: Today is Giving Tuesday. It was created back in 2012 in response to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It is a great day to give of yourself, through your time, or your talent, or both. There are often double or even triple-match challenges on Giving Tuesday, and a lot of companies offer matching programs, so it's a great day to participate if you can.

If you're listening after Giving Tuesday, this is a good reminder that, especially in a year like this when so many people and nonprofits are in need, *any* time is a good time to give what you can. Also, it's difficult to volunteer in person, for obvious reasons, but there are a ton of nonprofits that provide virtual volunteering opportunities. Check out [VolunteerMatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) for ideas.

Okay, I have no good segue here, so let me just say, let's meet this week's guest! And this one is a treat. Jared Rydelek is a professional weirdo. He's also a self-described fruit hunter. In this chat, we talk about anatomically correct fruit, seeds that *will* kill you, fruit and culture, accidental environmentalism, and so, so much more.

I have to include a disclaimer here. You're all grown-ass adults, but I have to remind you that Jared talks about trying some fruit that could be dangerous or even deadly, so this podcast is not a recommendation that you do that as well. That's why *he* does it.

So find out why Jared loves hunting for fruit, and why you might learn to love it too.

Julie: Hello, Jared. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Jared: Hi Julie! Thanks for having me.

Julie: I am so excited to talk with you because I ran across your channel and I thought, "This is so interesting!" You have been to over 25 countries in search of interesting fruit. So now, tell me, how does one start a YouTube channel and start a quest to find interesting fruit? I mean, there's over 70,000 species! So how did you even get started with this?

Jared: Well, I think you're going to like this. How I got into fruit hunting is probably weirder than the fruit hunting itself, because I'm a professional contortionist and sideshow performer.

Julie: [laughs] Okay!

Jared: So, what I do for a living is I bend my body into weird shapes like a cartoon character. I swallow swords. I eat fire.

Julie: What?!

Jared: Yeah. But we're not talking about that. We're talking about fruit.

Julie: [laughs] We'll talk about that later!

Jared: That's going to be *another* episode. But, I was traveling for work, for performing... And there's always been a little seed in my mind where fruit is interesting because I was raised vegetarian. But when things kind of spiraled out of control was when performing brought me to Malaysia. So, I was in Southeast Asia... [horn blasts in the distance]

You have to mind any kind of horn you might be hearing. I am in New York City right now. [laughs]

Julie: No worries!

Jared: So I was performing in Southeast Asia, in Malaysia, and I was there for, altogether, like nine months, over the course of three different winters. The first time that I went there, I thought it was just, like, interesting... What I was doing was the first time that I really was going that far away for such a length of time and I wanted to keep a vlog. I never did anything like that before, and I just wanted a vlog, maybe to put it on YouTube, maybe just for me, just to keep a little video diary of what was going on. So, I made a video of just, like, what flying in Malaysia was like, and I made a video about some of the junk food I found there, stuff like that, about my first show in Malaysia.

Then I did an episode... It wasn't an episode then. I filmed myself eating a fruit. It was a rose apple, I believe, was the first one that I had. No, no, not rose apple. Tamarillo, which is like a little tomato relative that... They call it a tree tomato because it grows... I don't think it's technically a tree... Mind you, I'm not a botanist. But it's closely related to tomatoes, and it has a flavor that is kind of like if you took a tomato and a guava and mashed them together. It was the first time I ever saw one, and I was already kind of interested in fruit so I filmed myself trying it. And watching it back, I was like, "This is something." And I was thinking of maybe putting the videos on YouTube, and at that point I was like, "I think this is what should be going on there."

And I went on YouTube and tried to see if anybody else was doing this, if anybody else was reviewing fruit, and I was met with just, like, this infinite amount of channels that were just... not good. Like, this is going back a ways. Things have gotten a little better now, but... So, I started going to different wet markets and grocery stores, and started learning a little bit about foraging, and by the end of the first three months that I was in Malaysia I had, I don't know, like, 10 or 20 different episodes on fruit.

Julie: Have you always been like this with things? Like, you find something and you want to dig into it, and understand more about it, or categorize it? Is that a personality trait of yours?

Jared: Oh absolutely. There is no one reason why I like doing the fruit hunting thing, there's a few. I think one of the initial ones that really initially captured me about it, and once it got me it wouldn't let me go, that first spark is more of, like, a collecting thing. I've always collected things my whole life. When I was little I collected coins. I collected stamps. I collected comic books. I collected trading cards when I was a kid. Then I got older and I start collecting... I still collect a bunch of stuff. I collect different sorts of antiques, and oddities, and weird stuff. I collect all sorts of stuff, but I live in a 500-square foot apartment. I was tickled by that urge to collect, and the fruit hunting, it's just a dream come true because I'm going out, I'm finding something, I'm collecting it just by having the experience but also getting to create a documentation of it. Having this is a way to solidify that collection without taking up space.

Julie: So how many fruits have you done videos on so far?

Jared: As we speak now, I think I'm up to 515, and in the backlog... because I usually film about six months ahead of when I post on YouTube, give or take. I might rush something depending on when I want to put it out. I think I have another 60, so I'm up to almost 600. That's episodes too, so some of the episodes I'll review, like, 10 different fruits in one, so it's probably 800 now if we're to count actual varieties; 800 or so.

Julie: And you've only got, like, 69,200 to go.

Jared: [laughs] In the beginning, when I first made the channel and, you know, when I was just having the few that I had in Malaysia, I thought this was a possible thing to collect. There was a completionist aspect to it, where I thought I could get them all.

I looked on... I think it was Yahoo Answers, I don't know if that still exists. I typed in on Yahoo Answers, 'How many different fruits are there', and I didn't even know to say 'fruit species' at the time, just "how many fruit?!" It said there are estimated to be 1,000. That's what somebody answered, some expert. And that is *not* true. There are over 1,000 bananas, so it is not true whatsoever.

I got the number of 70-80,000 different fruits from the book *The Fruit Hunters* by Adam Leith Gollner. And I don't know how he got that number, so I think it's a gray line. We don't know, really, how many. And every year we lose species, and every year we find or create new varieties, so it's a moving target.

Julie: Are you categorizing as you go? Like, "First I'm going to do all of the X-kind, not human bred..."? How are you approaching what you capture?

Jared: I didn't, like, crawl down the rabbit hole. I just leapt. So it's like, everything that I come across. I'm not picky. A lot of the... The traveling that goes into it. I might start with something that I wanted to try to find, but then you just kind of keep your eyes open and see what you come across. It might be my only opportunity to find certain species of fruit, so I just kind of take whatever I can when I can get the chance.

Julie: Are you traveling now specifically to find fruit, or is it, kind of, a side effect of being on the road for your performance?

Jared: Performing allows me to travel domestically a lot, and that is the sort of thing where somebody might... I mean, right now as we talk, we're in a pandemic so things are a little different. But if somebody were to book me for a gig in Texas, I would fly down to Texas for the gig, and then maybe book a couple extra days at the hotel so I can get out there and, kind of, sneak around the markets, maybe find a collector or something down there. So, that's domestically how it works. Internationally it's, I'd say, almost 100% fruit now. The fruit is the reason why I'm getting on the plane.

Julie: You mentioned... your example of going down to Texas and staying an extra couple of days and seeing if you find another collector there, so is this a *thing*?

Jared: Oh yeah, it's huge! It's a huge subculture full of foodies, and farmers, and backyard gardeners, and collection-oriented people. I'm kind of like an oddball out of it because I'm just, like... I'm an entertainer. There's fruitarians also... There's so many different routes that people take to end up in the sort of situation that I'm in. And when I'm travelling and meeting people, a lot of people are... they're like gardeners, mostly, so they'll kind of get bit by that bug and they'll try to get seeds. So, that's... The number one comment I get on YouTube, or email, or Instagram message, or Facebook message, anything, is, "Please send me seeds."

Julie: [laughs]

Jared: And it's the people who are collecting. Some people, they don't have... My problem is I don't have space to collect anymore antiques in my apartment, so this is a way for me to collect. Other people, they take home a tree, so they have a different side of it. So a lot of people that do it in the direction that I do, where they actually will travel, they'll go and then they'll send seeds home, and then they'll try to grow it at home.

Julie: Is there an element of, like, saving or reviving heritage fruits? Or saving species? Is that at all an element of those collectors?

Jared: Oh for sure, yeah. Every year we lose species, so it's... For some of the things out there, it's incredibly hard to find, and some of the gardeners are the ones who are keeping species alive. Probably the most shocking trip that I took was to Madagascar. The image in my head was the CGI cartoon *Madagascar*, where it's like, animals in the jungle and everything is all lush and green. When I got there it was like getting punched in the stomach because it was just burnt-out tree stumps going out into the distance.

I didn't... My background is not environmentalism at all, but in a way this channel has kind of shaken me a bit to start to pay attention to that sort of thing. And Madagascar was a big one because what people do is they cut down trees in order to burn it for charcoal because they use charcoal to cook their food, and heat their homes, and light their homes because they don't have electricity. They don't have gas, or anything like that. People are tremendously poor there. They're given no other option for energy, really, that they can afford, so they cut down the trees. And because of that, a lot of the endemic species of Madagascar are just... they're just going down to nothing.

So when I was there I found a few fruits that... I felt like what I was doing was important. Like, I'm a circus freak, you know? I wasn't planning on doing anything important. I was planning on just entertaining people. But I got there and I was like, "Oh... oh no. I need to do this. I need to document what this tastes like. I need to put this on camera because pretty soon this thing's going to be gone." If I come back ten years from now, I don't know if this will be there.

Julie: Wow. So what fruit is still there in Madagascar?

Jared: I went there for baobabs. Remind me to talk about that, but the one that was surprising to me was one I didn't expect to find. I didn't find it in any of my research or anything, one called the tapia, which I had never heard of. Tapia is a fruit that grows in Madagascar. It's a small thing, like the size of... a little bit bigger than an olive. It's a sweet fruit, tastes really good, a nice sweet flavor, a little bit of tartness to it. There is, like, one town that... their income comes from this fruit.

So when you actually drive down the road there you'll see vendors on the side of the road selling it. And you pull over, and I think for about ten cents they'll give you a bag of these fruits. People who are driving across the country, they'll pull over; it's like a street snack. And that is their industry. A side business with this fruit is that the leaves of it attract a certain kind of larva. I think it's a certain butterfly or a certain moth. And the larva produces silk; it's a silkworm. So there's a fine silk industry built around it, and there's this fruit built around it, and I think there's a special mushroom that only lives on tapia. So because there's, like, three little cash cows there, very tiny little cash cows, they decided to keep the trees instead of burning them.

Julie: Now, you said you went there to look for bayo... bayobob? Am I saying that right?

Jared: Baobab. I say bay-o-bob. That's, I think, the more anglicized way of saying it.

Julie: So what's that about? Why were you going there specifically for that?

Jared: The baobab, for those that haven't... It's got a little bit of notoriety to it. You may not know the name of it, if you're listening, but you may have seen it. They're these HUGE trees. Gigantic trees. Super wide, kind of like the great redwoods, and they go straight up into the sky. These big, tall trees, and there's no branches on the trunk, only at the very top of it. These trees, a lot of people know the image of it because they're so beautiful, and if you look at some of the iconic photos of Africa, there's a few countries that have baobab trees. But this has a fruit, and it is good.

It's really interesting too. In Africa, I think, they call it 'dead rat tree' because they're these big fuzzy-looking fruits. Kind of like the size of a football. I guess like coconut but a little bit more elongated. And they're velvety on the outside, they have a thin shell on it, and you can crack this shell, and on the inside is this very light, dry, fluffy kind of fruit. And you can take that and grind it into a powder and use it for drinks. That's how they use it in Madagascar. Or you can take a clump of it and just suck on it as, like, a candy. It tastes kind of like lemon yogurt.

Julie: Oh my gosh!

Jared: It's really good. Actually, it's one of my favorite fruits that I've found. And when I was there, like, I would just take a baobab shell and, like, put it in the backseat of the car that we had. We had a car and driver driving us around the country; it's the only way to get around. But I put a little baobab in the backseat as we went I, kind of, just had the best road snack ever. And then when you get down to the center of it, there's a little seed that tastes kind of like Brazil nuts.

Julie: It's soft enough to chew?

Jared: Yeah. Well, some varieties, it'll break your tooth. Other varieties are soft like an almond. But the trick to eating it is that if you take one of those full clumps with the fruit on it and you don't suck the fruit off first, and you just bite right into the fruit and the seed together, it tastes nasty. They don't mesh well. But if you eat the fruit, it's delicious, and if you eat the seed afterward, it's delicious, but you'd want to have them separately.

Julie: You've gone to 25 countries and all over the US, so what is... It's going to be hard to choose, but what has been your favorite fruit that you've tried, and why was it your favorite?

Jared: Yeah, it is hard to choose, but I made a Top Ten video. I tried to address this. If I were to have every fruit I've tried side by side, I might pick something different, but the one that always comes to mind, to me, is this one that's called a lukak. Lukak is related to durian. I think everybody knows about durian now. It's big, volleyball-sized fruit that's covered in spikes, and you cut it open, and the fruit on the inside has, like, a sweet vanilla taste, but also an eggy, oniony, and sulfuric taste. People don't like it. A lot of people don't like it, but a lot of the people that don't like it, don't like it because of not having a good one or a fresh one. They're having, like, a frozen one. So there's a lot of variable with durian.

But I would dare say that if you gave a lukak to anybody, they would love it because it's got the good qualities of durian; the fruitiness, and the sweetness, and the vanilla taste,

and a berry taste, and so many interesting positive flavors. But it doesn't have the onion, or the funkiness, or any... People say it tastes like a dead body.

Julie: Oh god! How would you know that?! [laughs]

Jared: I don't know, but that's what people who don't like it say. [laughs] And it doesn't have that. The lukak has got all the positivity... And it also looks really cool, and it's small. It's like the size of... I keep thinking in sports metaphors and I've never played a sport in my life. It's, I guess, smaller than a football. The size of a Nerf ball, how about that? It's covered in spikes but it's, like, a neon yellow on the outside. Then when you break it open on the inside it's got, like, a bright, vibrant orange color on the inside and, like, a firm, pasty kind of texture to it.

Julie: Where are these found?

Jared: I found it twice when I was in Borneo, a place called Kota Kinabalu, which is the main city there, and also a city called Miri. Those two places are the only places I've seen it in the entire world.

Julie: It sounds like you primarily want to eat the fruit, like, as the fruit, not made into other things. Is that right?

Jared: Well, I've gotten criticism about that, so it's something that... The beginning of it, when I started the channel, that was my only thought, more documentation. Like, "What does this fruit taste like when it comes from the tree?" Pick the fruit, show it on camera, show what it looks like, cut it open, show the inside, show the seed, maybe give some fun facts about it, and document the flavor as it comes from nature. That was the initial goal, and I keep towards that, but oh the hateful, threatening comments that I've gotten for not preparing fruit. It's important to people. People use fruit as part of their culture. Some of these fruits are something their grandma would make for them and I'm insulting them because I didn't like it, because I didn't prepare it properly.

Sometimes fruit, as it comes from nature, doesn't taste good. You've got to prepare it; you've got to cook it. It sometimes will kill you if you don't prepare it properly. So, I've started trying to be better with that. Now when I get something from nature I will at least take a shot at preparing it if it should be prepared.

Julie: Now, what's the most dangerous fruit that you've tried?

Jared: Ooh. There have been many, Julie.

Julie: [laughs] And he's lived to tell the tale!

Jared: Yeah. There's so many. I'll go with one that's... I'll give you two that are interesting. One of them, I'm sure everybody has seen. Maybe not internationally. Anyone in the US, in Europe, has seen this, called the yew berry. This is something that... you know what it is if you've seen it. Yew. It is a hedge that is outside, like, everybody's house, and it makes these little... it looks like pine needles, and there's these little red berries that have an opening and you can see the seed inside it. These are... the flesh of it is edible. If you take the flesh of it... And I don't recommend anyone does this, by the way; it's not worth it.

There's a little slimy pulp to it that tastes sweet. It doesn't have any flavor, really, but just like sugar, a sweet slime around this little seed. But that seed in there, if you were to take a handful of those things and just put them in your mouth and chew, you'll die. And that is not the way to go. It's a bad way to go. It does terrible things to you.

Julie: Any others that you have tried but you definitely don't recommend anybody else try?

Jared: I have one that... I will answer a different question. I'll tell you one that is terrible and will kill you, but you should eat it, but prepare it properly. It's called ackee. You can get it in a can. It's a Jamaican fruit. It's originally from Africa but it was brought over to Jamaica, and it is incredible. It is so good. It's a really interesting looking one; it's the size of... I'm going to avoid a sport metaphor here. It's the size of, like, a pear, and it's shiny... It's a smooth, red color, and it splits open when it's ready, and inside are these three, like, jet black, hard seeds, and it sits inside this firm, white pulp.

If you eat the seeds, or if you eat the shell of it, the red part, or if you eat the flesh of it when it is not ripe, or not prepared properly, you'll get something that is known as 'Jamaican vomiting sickness' where you have... It's exactly what it sounds like.

Julie: Oh, no! [laughs]

Jared: If you eat enough of it, I believe it affects your brain, and you'll actually vomit to death. Doesn't sound good, right? But hear me out. The chemical compound that does that to you is in a huge amount when you eat it when it's unripe, or if you eat it in the seed or the shell of it. But the flesh of it, when it's ripe, has a very, very small amount of that compound where you can actually eat the white, creamy part on the inside. You could eat that and you'll probably be okay. But as a safeguard, when it's used, you cook the hell out of it so any kind of chemical compound that's in there is gone.

There's a lot of foods that we can't eat... We do eat, but we eat because it's prepared properly, like kidney beans will mess you up. You never can eat a raw kidney bean. It's bad. Rhubarb is bad for you. Bay leaves are bad for you. There's so many different things that we eat every day that could actually kill you if you ate enough of it and you didn't eat it prepared properly. Ackee is no different, but if you prepare it properly, it is so good.

Julie: What is the flavor profile?

Jared: It's somewhere between avocado, almonds, and scrambled eggs.

Julie: Is that the consistency or the taste?

Jared: The taste is more like avocado and almonds, maybe a little bit like tofu also. It's got, like, a protein-rich, creamy, rich flavor, kind of buttery. But the texture of it is more like scrambled eggs. Some people say it taste like scrambled eggs, but I don't really feel it does. The texture is definitely like that.

Julie: You've encountered scary fruits, if there can be such a thing, but what's the scariest experience you've had thus far? Or maybe the most amazing experience you've had as part of this whole process of finding fruits?

Jared: Here's, maybe... I don't know if it's so much scary, but an extremely awkward and, kind of, nerve-racking experience that I had while finding fruit, would be with one that I did on the coco de mer. So, the coco de mer... I made a five-part episode on it. It's feature length! There's so much to say about it. It's the world's largest and heaviest nut. It looks like if you took two large coconuts and shoved them together, and it looks exactly like the pelvic region of a woman, so much so that people call it the 'butt nut'.

On one side of it, it looks like a butt, 100%. The other side of it looks like the front of a pelvis and actually will have a little tuft of fiber growing where you would expect it to grow.

Julie: Really? Wow!

Jared: It is, like, anatomically correct. So much so that... Of course people think it's an aphrodisiac. It only grows on two small islands in the Seychelles. It is hugely endangered. This is one that is likely to become extinct, and it's hard to preserve it because it takes, I believe, up to 50 years for it to grow from a seed to a tree that produces fruit. So, there's a lot of tension around it, and because it's an aphrodisiac and people treat it as such to this day, especially in Southeast Asia, much like the rhino horn, shark fins, and everything like that, this is something that is endangered.

So, when I went to the Seychelles trying to get a taste of it, I wanted to do it through legal means. And I'd heard that you could legally get your hands on a coco de mer, that if you spoke to people who had it growing on their property that it was their right to give you some. So I thought I would do that for documentation, because no one has really given a proper documentation. I justified that that would be okay.

When I got there, I started asking around. I did find somebody who wanted to give it to me... It became apparent that it was going to be illegally acquired, so I was faced with, like, an internal turmoil of, "Do I want to be a *Captain Planet* villain? Do I want to eat from an endangered fruit that very appropriately is the forbidden fruit historically?" It was, like, too perfect. I chose not to, but in asking around... I was staying at an Airbnb, and this sweet lady who ran this Airbnb... She was so kind to me.

Over there it's a matriarchal society, so ladies are in charge. They run the home, and they do all the wheeling and dealing on the phone, and everything like that. This woman, she was a force; so sweet, but not somebody that you want to mess with. And when I very kindly, gently, carefully worded to her, "Is there any way that I would be able to find the coco de mer and *legally* try it? I've heard that's possible. Do you know anywhere where I can go?" She, who had been very sweet to me, her face just flipped.

She just went... The life just drained from her face and she was like, "If you start asking around about the coco de mer, trying to eat the coco de mer, not only will you be in trouble and not allowed back into this country, but whoever finds it for you will get in trouble. They can get fined. They can get arrested." I think that's probably... Not just awkward, but probably one of the scariest moments sniffing around for fruit.

Julie: You've gone to so many places and have gotten into interesting situations. What has been the most mind-blowing fact, or experience that you've had? Something that was like, eight years ago when you started, you would have never imagined that you would never be in this situation or know this information?

Jared: That's another one where there's a lot of things that have happened, and I'm maybe not doing full justice to that question. I mean, the variety of flavors that exist in nature is incredible. How people use different fruits and plants is really fascinating. There's so many different fruits out there, and there is no limit to the amount of times that you can be surprised by what comes out of nature. You'll be like, "Did you know there's a fruit that tastes exactly like peanut butter?" "Oh really? Here's one that tastes exactly like sour cream. Here's a leaf that tastes like fish!"

Nature provides so many interesting things that aren't getting the publicity. If you go to a supermarket, we're narrowed down to, like, what is more commercially viable, but nature has so much more than that. I visited with a tribe in Northeastern India because of kiwis. They have a kiwi there that doesn't really taste very good, it's a special variety of kiwi, I believe, but what they do is they cut it up, and they mix it with sugar, and they

let it naturally ferment, and they make a kiwi wine out of it. And in trying to find this kiwi... Because the fruit is... More than anything, it's just an excuse to go places. [laughs] That is me showing my cards here. The fruit, that's great. The fruit is fine, but that main reason I'm doing this is that I can discover things like this.

The tribe that consumes the kiwi wine is the most interesting tribe that I've ever come across. They're in the northeastern part of India, and this is one of the least visited parts India. If you go to the border town... and you actually need to go through all this paperwork and get proper permits and everything to go there. Even if you live in India you need to get a permit to go there. There's this tribe that, historically, they were known for having the most beautiful women in the area. So much so that neighboring tribes would break into their area, and kidnap these beautiful women, and take them back.

So what they did to combat that is they started doing body modification on the girls. Like, when they were young... Similar to foot binding and what have you, they did facial tattoos and nose plugs and ear plugs. So imagine the biggest gauges that you can imagine, but in both nostrils, one on either outer part of the nose and in their ears as well. And this is a practice that, I believe, became illegal in the '50s or '60s. So when you're there, you see some younger people with it... Not younger like teenager, but you'll see some middle-aged people who have it, like in their 50s. You'll see someone who has, like, little, teeny plugs and a little bit of tattooing because they didn't fully manage to go through the whole process.

But if you see the very elderly, people who are in their late 80s and 90s, they're gorgeous. Like, beautiful tattoo images on their faces, kind of mimicking nature; tree-like patterns. And they have these huge plugs in their nose and their ears, which ironically was used to make them appear "ugly," but now that is, like, why people go there, to see how... For me, it's so beautiful to see. And they are the last of this practice, and they're also... They have so many different customs that are being lost. They have a language that the younger generation doesn't know.

If anyone goes to Northeast India, don't just rock up into town. You're going to end up in trouble. You have to know somebody to let yourself in. The person who brought me in was a younger guy, probably in his mid-20s, but his grandfather was, like, a major official there. I believe he was, like, a priest, so he had connections with the older generation and brought me into a few different homes to meet with these women. He didn't know the language. He knew a few basic words. And they shared food with me, and he didn't really know much of, like, how things were made. He was saying to me that a lot of the younger generation, they don't know the language, they don't know these certain practices, and they're losing that communication.

That's the sort of thing where... The kiwi wine is part of that, it's something that they did originally and it is being passed down a little bit, but a lot of it is getting lost. The main person... I met with a couple of people, but the one that I shared a meal with, she didn't know how old she was, but the grandson - I think he was maybe a great-grandson - he didn't know but said, "We think she's in her 90s." Ten years from now, that's gone, you know? And I stumbled across it trying to find kiwis. That was something that I didn't even know what a thing. I just wanted to find this kiwi wine, and here I am, very fortunate to stumble into a cultural practice with this community that is drastically changing.

Julie: So if one of our listeners wanted to learn more about the world through fruit, they're not going to find it at their supermarket, necessarily. What would you suggest is the best way for them to get started in collecting fruit for themselves?

Jared: I wouldn't poo-poo the supermarket, because things are getting better. One thing that has gotten, like, on my list of things to try to do, my mission... adding to the mission, is to promote plant diversity; educate about what's out there in the world, but also things that you can just get from the supermarket. A lot of the things I talk about on the channel are things that I happen across just going into, like, maybe a supermarket that is catering towards a different community. And that is something most people... you might not even know you have an Asian supermarket in your town, but there might be. There might be one nearby. There might be one, like, a 20-minute drive away.

And if you poke around enough supermarkets... Even if you go to Whole Foods, they'll occasionally get something. Granted, it's going to be, like, \$20 to get the same thing that'll be \$2 at an Asian supermarket, but they might have something cool. Instead of going down the aisle where the snacks are, take a harder look at the variety that's at the end of the aisle in the produce department and you'll probably find something. Jackfruit's showing up everywhere now; pick it up. Jackfruit's great. And you can get... Yellow dragon fruits are another one that I'm noticing everywhere.

And that one, I'm a little bit irritated but mostly happy because, like, I worked my butt off trying to get a comparison video with a yellow dragon fruit, a white dragon fruit, and a red dragon fruit, and that took me hunting, and coercing a botanical garden to give me one. It was so tricky for me to get that video, and this is all in Malaysia, by the way. But that was back in 2013. Now you can get one, like, down the block from my house. I can get all three. I think people are getting more interested. I like to take the tiniest iota of credit in just putting more information into the search engine optimization that fruit is interesting. Things are getting a little bit more... they get trendy, and because of that there's a greater demand.

So, you can kind of, like, vote with your dollar. When you go and you buy that jackfruit, buy that yellow dragon fruit, or whatever looks interesting, you'll find it and that's going to show that produce company, like, "Hey, maybe we should bring something else over from India to the United States. People are really loving this, maybe they'll like this other thing."

Julie: Yeah, for sure. Jared, thank you so much for opening up this brand-new world, hopefully, for our listeners. I'm really grateful for you taking so much time and sharing so much of your enthusiasm and your knowledge. I appreciate it.

Jared: I'm so glad to talk about it. Thank you so much, Julie. Thanks for having me.

Don't you just love the idea of exploring and learning about the world through fruit? It's so cool! You can follow Jared's adventures on his [Weird Explorer](#) YouTube channel. You can also find him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) as @WeirdExplorer. Of course I'll link everything in the show notes.

Just a reminder that you can find the podcast on Instagram [@LoveWhatYouLovePod](#), and on Twitter, [@WhatYouLovePod](#), and the website is [LoveWhatYouLovePod.com](#). I would really love it if you would support the podcast by leaving rating or review on [Apple Podcasts](#) - even if that's not where you listen. Or you could spread the love and share about the podcast on social media, and we also have a Patreon, at [Patreon.com/LoveWhatYouLovePod](#).

Zeke Rodrigues Thomas at Mindjam Media provides amazing editing assistance. You can find Zeke at MindjamMedia.com. Just a reminder that all of the transcripts for *Love What You Love* are available for everyone for free on the website. Thank you, as always, to the wonderful Emily White for the fantastic transcripts. If you need transcripts, reach out to her at HireEmilyWhite@gmail.com. The music for *Love What You Love* is called "Inspiring Hope" by Pink-Sounds. A link to that artist is included in the show notes.

Go out there and love the hell out of whatever it is that you love. We all need it more than ever. Thanks for listening. Let's hang out again soon.

Links:

Find Jared on [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and WeirdExplorer.com

Jared recommends [SEED Madagascar](#) (Sustainable Environment, Education & Development in Madagascar). Operating in southeast Madagascar, they manage a wide range of sustainable development and conservation projects.

My favorite nonprofits:

FairFight.com

[World Central Kitchen](#)

GivingTuesday.org

VolunteerMatch.org

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