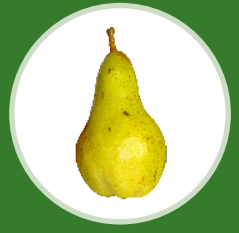




COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

PEARS



Pears are grown on trees and are part of the Rosaceae family. Pears date back over 4,000 years and are one of the earliest cultivated tree fruits. The pears we eat today originated in two different regions of the world. European or French pears were cultivated from wild pears native to the Caucasus mountains near present day Armenia and Azerbaijan. Asian pears are native to Japan and China. Pears made their way around the world on trade and emigration routes. All pears have a fruity aroma and sweet flavor. European pear varieties have a soft, slightly grainy texture. Asian pear varieties have a firm, crisp texture. Pears can be used raw or baked, canned, dried, juiced, poached, pureed, roasted, sautéed, or steamed. Michigan pears are harvested from August through October. Processed pears are available year round.



PEARS ARE

- A good source of fiber. Fiber helps us feel fuller and benefits the digestive and cardiovascular systems.
- A source of vitamin C*. Vitamin C is important to the body's tissues and supports a healthy immune system.

**Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium, and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

MICHIGAN MADE

Pears grow well in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, especially near Lake Michigan. Michigan is the fifth largest producer of pears in the nation. There are over 400 Michigan farms growing pears on nearly 700 acres of old growth pear trees. Bartlett is the most popular pear variety grown in Michigan. Other European varieties grown in the state include Anjou, Bosc, Harrow Crisp, Delight, Duchess Stark, and Moonglow and Asian varieties include 20th Century, Hosui, Nijisseiki, and Niitaka. Many Michigan orchards offer "u-pick" operations where consumers can hand pick pears. Michigan pear growers primarily grow pears for the baby food industry and fresh market. They also grow pears for the canned, juice, brandy, and wine markets. Orchards in Berrien, Allegan, Van Buren, Washtenaw, and Livingston produce the most pears statewide.



FUN FACTS

- There are over 5,000 varieties of pears worldwide.
- Pears ripen from the inside out and continue to ripen after they are picked.
- Pears bruise easily so they are picked by hand.
- Pears are also called "butter fruit" for their soft texture.
- Pears can be red, yellow, green, brown, or multi-colored.
- China, Italy, and the United States grow the majority of pears worldwide.
- Seckel pears are sweet, spicy small pears also called baby, sugar, or candy pears.
- Comice pears taste the sweetest.
- Asian pears are crisp like apples.
- Bosc pears are best for baking and poaching.
- Bartlett pears are best for canning.
- The skin of Bartlett pears brightens as it ripens.
- Pear tree wood is used to make fine furniture, millwork, and musical instruments.
- In many cultures pears are considered a symbol of affection, happiness, and inner peace.

BUYING AND STORING

- Select firm pears with unblemished skin and stems intact that give slightly to pressure but aren't soft.
- Store at room temperature until ripe. Store ripe whole pears in the refrigerator for up to five days.
- To freeze: peel, halve, core, and quarter ripe pears. Freeze on a lined sheet pan overnight, transfer to freezer bags or containers, and store in freezer up to ten months.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.

MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, pears are available frozen, dried, canned, and juiced. When buying packaged pears, be sure to read labels and choose items with no added sugar and juices that are pasteurized, unsweetened, and 100% juice. Unpasteurized juices may contain harmful bacteria that can make you sick.

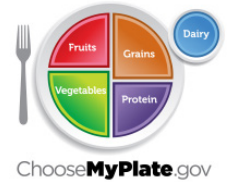




COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER: PEARS

EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Pears are part of the Fruit Group. Most people need 1–2 cups of fruit per day. For more information visit: myplate.gov.



IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

PEAR WALDORF & CHICKEN STUFFED PITAS

Time: 10 minutes | Makes: 6 servings | Serving Size: ½ stuffed pita

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 194, Carbohydrate 32g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 11g, Total Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 22mg, Sodium 203mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 pears, cored and diced
- ¼ cup celery, diced
- 1 cup seedless grapes, halved lengthwise
- 1 cup cooked chicken, chopped or shredded
- 2 tablespoons toasted walnuts, finely chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons light mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons low-fat sour cream
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 3 large whole-wheat or whole grain pocket style pita bread, halved
- 1 cup leaf lettuce, mixed greens, or baby spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk mayonnaise, sour cream, and lemon juice in a large bowl.
2. Add pears, celery, grapes, chicken, and walnuts, if using. Mix gently to combine.
3. Line the sides of each pita with leaf lettuce, mixed greens, or baby spinach.
4. Fill each pita with Pear Waldorf Salad, distribute evenly until all are filled.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

TRY THIS

- Add pears to applesauce, sandwiches, smoothies, and pancake, waffle, or muffin batter.
- Grill or sauté pears and serve with a dollop of vanilla Greek yogurt and a dash of cinnamon.
- Dip firm pear slices into nut butter or fruit dip for a snack.

CHANGE IT UP

- Add raisins and chopped apples.
- Garnish with fresh chopped herbs like dill or parsley.
- Skip the pita and serve on a bed of lettuce.

