

WASHINGTON GROWN
HARVEST
OF THE
MONTH

COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM

Crunchy Pear Celery Salad

4 stalks celery, trimmed and cut in half crosswise

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

2 tablespoons honey

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 ripe pears, preferably red Bartlett or Anjou, diced

1 cup finely diced white Cheddar cheese

1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted (omit if nut allergies exist in the classroom)

Freshly ground pepper, to taste

6 large leaves butterhead or other lettuce

Preparation:

Soak celery in a bowl of ice water for 15 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Cut into 1/2-inch pieces.

Whisk vinegar, honey and salt in a large bowl until blended. Add pears; gently stir to coat. Add the celery, cheese and pecans; stir to combine. Season with pepper. Divide the lettuce leaves among 6 plates and top with a portion of salad. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Recipe from eatingwell.com

PEARS

HOW IT'S GROWN

Pear, a bell-shaped or globular fruit, grows on a leaf-shedding tree similar to the apple. The pear tree grows about 45 feet (14 m) tall. It has pointed, oval leaves and showy clusters of white blossoms. During the growing season, pear orchards need the ideal warm days and cool nights that are found in California, Oregon, and Washington regions.

[Good photo- science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/life/botany/pear-info.htm]

Harvest - Pears do not ripen properly on the tree, so growers pick the fruit when it is mature, but not yet ripe. This keeps the fruit's flavor at a peak and stops the soft flesh from becoming gritty with deposits of lignin and other organic compounds. Pickers carefully harvest every pear by hand, and place them into special orchard bins to prevent bruising.

Sources: <http://www.usapears.com>, and science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/life/botany/pear-info.htm

DID YOU KNOW?

- Oregon and Washington produce 84% of the nation's fresh pear crop.
- Only pears grown in Oregon and Washington are sold under the USA Pears label.
- Total U.S. production of pears in 2011 was 940,110 tons, valued at \$387 million.

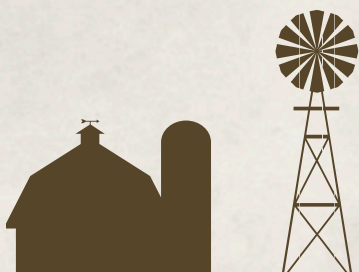


• The

Wenatchee Valley, an abundant producer of all USA pear varieties, has orchards dating back to the 1850's!

- December is National Pear Month, as declared by the USDA.
- The first arrival of pear trees to Oregon and Washington came with the pioneers. These trees found their way to the region by way of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

For more information visit: <http://www.usapears.com/Facts%20And%20Nutrition/Tree%20To%20Table/History%20of%20Pears.aspx> or http://www.agmrc.org/commodities_products/fruits/pears/



SCHOOL GARDEN

Just because it is cold outside, it doesn't mean you can't start preparing for your spring garden. February is a great time to start preparing for the temperature increase in March and April. Get a head start on the season by starting some veggies indoors this month. Watch your seeds grow in the classroom and once the soil begins to warm in March and April, you can transplant them outside. Artichokes, broccoli, leeks and tomatoes are just a few of the many veggies that you can start!

To learn more about starting seeds indoors and gardening, check out:

<http://seattletilth.org/learn/newsletter/start-your-garden-indoors>

http://www.portlandnursery.com/docs/veggies/veggie_calendar.pdf

www.kidsgardening.org/node/3591

www.garden.org/articles/articles.php?q=show&id=2352

Maritime Northwest Garden Guide by Carl Elliot

JUST THE FACTS

- A pear tree begins to bear fruit when it is about four years old, and may live 50 to 75 years.
- A 25-year-old pear tree yields 1,250 to 2,250 pounds (570 to 1,020 kg) of pears a year.
- Pears rank second to the apple as the most popular US fruit.
- There are currently more than 1,600 pear growers in Oregon and Washington
- There are more than 3000 known varieties in the world. Check out [THIS LINK](#) to read about the varieties.
- Washington and Oregon export about 35% of their fresh pear crop to more than 50 countries around the world.
- US production comes from states in the Northwest,

plus New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and California. Imports come from South America, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa.

- 4 principale REGIONS in Washington and Oregon: Wenatchee, Yakima, Mid-Columbia, Medford

STUDENT SLEUTH

- Label the parts of the pear.
- How long does it take a pear tree to produce fruit? Five to seven years.
- Pears are a great source of fiber. How much fiber is found in one pear? What is the health benefit of fiber?
- True or false: One pear provides 5% of your recommended daily fiber? FALSE : One pear provides around 5.52 g of fiber which is 22% of your daily value!
- Describe what to look for when choosing a tasty pear. How do you know it is ripe? How do you ripen a pear?
- Have the children check out whfoods.org and do more in depth research on the nutrition and health benefits of the pear and/or other fruits and vegetables.

For more information visit: usapears.com and whfoods.org/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=28



BOTANICAL FACTS

Family: Rosaceae

Genus: Pyrus

Species: P. communis, P. pyrifolia, P. calleryana (Ornamental), Edible fruit - P. communis (Common Pear)

Pear is the name for the fruit tree of the genus Malus and for its fruit, a pome, which is edible in most species. Like the apple, it belongs to the family Rosaceae.

There are 30 known species of pears, three of which are important for edible fruit production. The common pear,

Pyrus communis or European Pear, is cultivated mainly in Europe and North America. *Pyrus pyrifolia* is mainly grown in eastern Asia. This pear is commonly known as the Nashi, Asian, or Apple Pear. The *Pyrus bretschneideri*, the Ya pear, is also cultivated in Asia.

There are some species of pears that are only used as ornamental trees, like *pyrus salicifolia* or the Willow-leaved Pear.

For more information: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/pear.html and www.usapears.com and www.botany.com/pyrus.html

LITERATURE LINKS

PRIMARY

Eating Pairs: Counting Fruits and Vegetables by Twos by Sarah Schuette

Mr. Putter & Tabby Pick the Pears by Cynthia Rylant

Too Many Pears by Jackie French and Bruce Wheatly

Apples to Oregon by Hopkinson, Deborah

SECONDARY

A Fruit and Vegetable Man by Roni Schotter (Little Brown & Co.; 1st Edition, 1993)

The Garden and Farm Book of Fruits and Vegetables by Robert C. Barron (Fulcrum Publishing, 2003)

Pears On A Willow Tree by Leslie Pietrzyk (Harper Perennial, 1999)

ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

ART

The pear has long use as an art object and often found in paintings and photographs. Vincent Van Gogh even painted both the flowering tree as well as the fruit of art and commonly seen. Have the children create their own art masterpiece featuring a pear.

MATH

Use pears in math equations. You could even use multiple pairs or pears to demonstrate multiplication!

SCIENCE AND WRITING

There are thousands of varieties of pears, each differing in size, shape, color, taste and storage qualities. The Bosc, Bartlett, Anjou and Comice pears are ones you are most likely to find in your store.

Have the students observe, smell, feel, and taste each pear. Have the students write down their observations using descriptive words like: grainy, crunchy, crisp, sweet, yellow, red, etc. Have a class discussion about their findings including: similarities and differences between the varieties. Lastly, take a vote on which variety was most popular.

For more information about the varieties of pears, visit:

<http://usapears.com/en/Recipes%20And%20Lifestyle/Now%20Serving/Pears%20and%20Varieties.aspx>

STUDENT ADVOCATES

Where are the pears from? Is there a store within walking distance of home and/or school that has pears for sale? If so, have the students investigate the variety of the pear(s) and where they came from. With this information, have the students map out where they came from. If they came from a local Washington or Oregon farm, have the students write letters to the farmers thanking them for all their work. In the letters, the students can also ask for the history of the farm. Questions they could ask: How long have they been growing pears? What is the variety that yields the most pears? How did they learn how to grow and harvest pears? Etc.

If the store doesn't provide Washington or Oregon pears (and other produce) have the students advocate for local produce!

Design a pear poster! Have the students work together to design a pear poster with facts and drawings. The posters could be hung throughout the school and in the cafeteria to inform the other students and staff about the amazing fruit! Additionally, the students could contact nearby stores about hanging the posters up.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Recognized as one of the 20 most popular fruits by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the pear is an excellent source of fiber and vitamin C and it's no wonder why! They are an excellent source of fiber and a good source of vitamin C!

FIBER: Pears are one of the leading fruit sources of fiber. A medium sized pear packs 6 grams of fiber, which equals about 24% of your daily value (DV) for fiber! The skin of the pear contains the majority of the fiber found in a pear, so enjoy the skin for added flavor, texture, and nutrients.

VITAMIN C: Each medium sized pear contains approximately 7mg, or 10%, of your daily need for vitamin C. Likewise, pears naturally house phytonutrients and antioxidants, a variety of which are found in the vibrantly colored skins of the different pear varieties.

Source: usapears.com

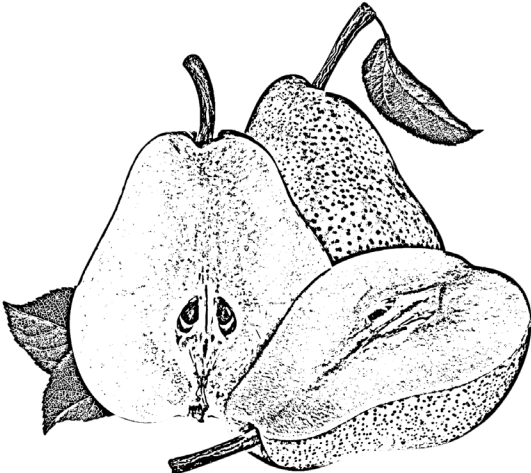
NUTRITION label for pear!!!

Nutrition graph from California Department of Education.



Name _____

Pears



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