** Try Day Friday – December**

**Welcome to pomegranate season!**

**Brought to you by:**

**What exactly are pomegranates?** Pomegranates are native to a region from Iran to northern India and they also thrive in the drier climates of California and Arizona.  The pomegranate name is derived from Latin and one interpretation is “apple with many seeds.”  Most of the pomegranates available in the U.S. come from orchards in California -- but they have a short season, typically from October through February.  They don't ripen after they are harvested, so they travel and store well.  There are about 800 seeds, or “arils,” in an average pomegranate.  The seeds taste sweet and a little tart (they are like tiny juice pockets that burst when you eat them!) and are used in a wide variety of dishes and recipes.  They are great to enjoy at Thanksgiving and over the holidays!  They are also used to make pomegranate juice and the latest trend is to cook them down to make pomegranate molasses.

**How do you pick them?** Pomegranates should be a deep red or reddish brown color and feel heavy for their size.  Try to avoid bruises, cut marks or soft spots and you should be able to pick a perfect pomegranate.

**How do you eat them?** The peel of the pomegranate is actually quite tough so you can cut it with a knife (or score it) to break it open.  Then, you need to remove the seeds from the peel and pulp...this can be the tricky part.  If you aren’t careful, you can end up with juice everywhere...and it will stain!

**How do you get those great-tasting pesky seeds out?** One option is to buy pre-seeded pomegranates.  Personally, we don’t recommend this for a couple reasons.  First, pre-seeded pomegranates can be ridiculously expensive!  Also, because the “arils” don’t last very long after they are seeded, they can go bad very quickly…we bought a pre-seeded pomegranate from a local store a couple of years ago and the seeds were mushy and moldy within a couple of days. Here are couple ways to make it much easier (and less messy) to get the seeds out.

**1.  Submersion:** Fill a medium size bowl with water.  Place a pomegranate half (or quarter) in the bowl, submerged in the water.  Pry the seeds out and let them fall to the bottom of the bowl -- the white pulp will float on the top of the water.  Now all you have to do is scoop out the pulp, remove the seeds from the water and repeat for the rest of the fruit. **2.  Beat it:** Cut the pomegranate in half, then use a knife to score (or make small slits) in the outside peel of the pomegranate.  Hold the pomegranate over a bowl and beat it with a large spoon - a wooden spoon works well.  The seeds will fall into the bowl leaving only a few seeds left to pry out -- but careful, juice will come out too!

**How do you store the seeds?**

 **• Eat them very soon!**  Once a pomegranate is seeded, you need to store them in the refrigerator and eat the seeds within 2-3 days or they will begin to go bad and get moldy.

 **• Freeze the seeds!**  Preserve the delicious pomegranate seeds by freezing them -- they will keep frozen for up to a year.  Defrosted seeds may seem a little mushy, but will still be fantastic in your recipes.

 **• Shelf life?**Pomegranates (whole and not yet seeded) will store in the refrigerator for 3-4 weeks.

**The Power of Pomegranates:** Many assign the pomegranate as the top superfood in the fruit category.  Its antioxidant capacity tops the charts, and it is high in vitamin C and potassium.  Studies with pomegranates appear promising in lowering cholesterol, blood pressure, and atherosclerosis, in addition to reducing risk of breast, prostate and colon cancer.  The phytochemicals in this wonder-fruit may also help fight depression and bone-density loss.  Enjoy pomegranates fresh October through February, and as juice (4 oz. serving) March through September to provide a constant intake of this beneficial superfood!

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**PEAR SALAD POMEGRANATE**

The flavor combination in this salad is amazing - the pomegranates and pears work so well with the blue cheese and walnuts - it is incredibly good!  This salad is definitely worth the time to seed the pomegranate! Serves 6

MAKE THE DRESSING:

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

2 Tbsp honey

1 tsp dijon mustard

1/2 tsp garlic powder

1 Tbsp lemon juice (juice from one lemon)

1/4 tsp black pepper

2 Tbsp olive oil

Place in a small bowl or mason jar and stir or shake to combine.  Set aside.

TOAST THE NUTS:

1/2 cup walnuts (chopped)

Place in a small dry skillet over medium heat.  Cook 3-5 minutes until toasted and fragrant.  Set aside.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER:

8 cups romaine lettuce (chopped)

1 pear (thinly sliced)

1/3 cup pomegranate seeds (see quick tip)

1/4 cup blue cheese (or gorgonzola cheese, crumbled)

Add to a large bowl along with the toasted walnuts.  Drizzle with some of the dressing and gently toss to combine.  Add more dressing if desired.

SERVE AND ENJOY!

NUTRITION INFORMATION FOR ONE SERVING

 **Calories:** 185

 **Fat:** 13 g

 **Saturated Fat:** 2.6 g

 **Total Carbohydrate:** 16 g

 **Cholesterol:** 7 mg

 **Fiber:** 3.5 g

 **Sugars:** 11 g

 **Protein:** 4 g

 **Sodium:** 115 mg

Enjoy this idea or many others on [www.eatrealamerica.com](http://www.eatrealamerica.com). And, consider adding pomegranates to your smoothies, oatmeal or on top of your yogurt and granola!