

Ask a Expert: How to Use Pomegranates as a Healthy Choice



As the holidays approach, fresh pomegranates become readily available. Pomegranates are found in most Utah grocery stores from October through December, and two varieties are grown in Washington County. These native Mediterranean and Middle Eastern fruits used in anything from salads to desserts are an excellent source of phytochemicals, making them one of the best antioxidants available. The edible seeds of these yellow-orange to deep-red colored fruits have a citrus flavor and make a delicious juice.

Over the last few years, the health value of the pomegranate has been studied. Preliminary research shows that the pomegranate may be one of the best antioxidant fruits that can fight cancer, slow the aging process, increase heart health and slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Several studies from UCLA and USDA indicate that pomegranates are a major stabilizer of cancer. The naturally occurring antioxidants in this fruit fight the free radicals that promote disease.

One average pomegranate contains about 100 calories and 25 grams of sugar and is a good source of potassium. Consider this information when preparing the healthy fruit.

- To open a pomegranate, cut off the blossom end and score through the skin marking the fruit in quarters. Submerge the pomegranate in ice-cold water and rub the seeds off the skin. The skin will float to the top, the seeds to the bottom, and then they can be drained. See the demonstration video at <http://tinyurl.com/peelingpomegranates>.
- To store pomegranates, keep them at room temperature for a week, then refrigerate in an air-tight bag for up to 3 months or freeze the seeds for 6 months to a year.

Pomegranates are enjoyable in salsa, salads, with main dishes, as jelly and syrup or just by the handful.

Dixie Pomegranate Fresh Salsa

1 pomegranate, seeded
 2 oranges, peeled and cut into small pieces
 1 bunch cilantro
 1 jalapeño pepper, chopped
 1 tomato, diced
 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
 1-2 tablespoons lime juice

Score pomegranate and break apart in ice water. Drain the seeds. Add all ingredients and chill for 2 hours before serving.

Pomegranate Jelly

3 1/2 cups pomegranate juice, fresh, bottled or frozen and thawed
 1/4 cup lemon juice
 1 package (2 ounces) powdered pectin
 4 1/2 cups sugar

Combine pomegranate juice, lemon juice and pectin in a 4 or 5-quart pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Stir in sugar until well blended; return to a boil and continue boiling, uncovered, stirring occasionally for 2 minutes. Remove jelly from heat immediately. Put in jars and process in hot water bath for 15 minutes. Cool for 24 hours, then remove the ring before storing.

[//www.youtube.com/embed/a0Xh2rX9Zhw8544800](http://www.youtube.com/embed/a0Xh2rX9Zhw8544800)

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