

## December: National Pear Month

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension  
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

Many fruits are out of season during the winter months, but pears are available nearly year-round, which makes them a great addition to any meal.



They come in a variety of shapes, sizes and skin colors, including green, golden, yellow and red. Pears can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great as a quick snack, to chop and add to fruit salads, and can also be baked, broiled or grilled. December is

National Pear Month. Check out the following tips and information on buying, storing, and adding pears to a healthful eating plan.

### Tips for Selection, Storage, and Preparation

**Nutrition and health:** Pears are an excellent source of dietary fiber. A medium-sized pear has 24



percent of the recommended daily allowance. Pears also have potassium; a medium-sized pear has about 190 milligrams of potassium.

They have no saturated fat, sodium, or cholesterol and are a good source of vitamin C. A medium pear has about 100 calories.

**How do you know when a pear is ripe?** Bartlett pears change from green to yellow as they ripen. Non-Bartlett pears (Anjou, Bosc, Comice,



Concorde, Seckel and Forelle) don't drastically change color when ripening. Pears ripen from the inside out, so check for ripeness by "checking the neck." Gently press near the stem with your thumb. When it gives to gentle pressure it is ripe and ready to eat. When the pear is soft around the middle it is overripe.

**Selection and storage:** Choose pears that are firm to the touch and free from bruises and blemishes. If



pears are ripe, they can be used immediately or refrigerated to slow down further ripening. If pears need to ripen, leave them out at room temperature for 7 to 10 days. Putting pears in a paper bag will help them ripen faster, but remember to check them daily so they don't get overripe.

**Cleaning and preparing:** Wash pears under running water before eating. When pears are cut up for



dishes, browning is a natural process that occurs when they are exposed to the air. A mild solution of half water and half lemon juice can be brushed on

cut pears to slow this process. Lightly poaching pears will also slow the browning process and is a good way to prepare them for use in salads.

**Pear varieties and uses.** Firmer varieties such as Bosc, Anjou, or Concorde are best for poaching,



baking, and grilling. They have denser flesh, hold their shape better, and keep their flavor. Pears not ideal for heating are Yellow Bartlett, Red Bartlett, Starkrimson, and Comice, as their flavor and texture are at best when ripe and

fresh. When heated, the consistency may over soften and have reduced flavor.

**Great additions to meals and side dishes.** Pears are perfect for snacks, as salad toppings, additions to ice cream or yogurt, and as a side dish. Pears are also great baked, poached, sautéed, roasted, or grilled. They can be used in baked goods and made into preserves, jams, and chutneys. Overripe pears are still tasty, just not great for serving whole or sliced. They can be used in smoothies, sauces, or as a thickening agent for soups, stocks or stews.

Check out the USA Pears website at <http://www.usapears.com/>, which includes more pear nutrition information and recipes. For more food, nutrition and health information from



Nebraska Extension go to [www.food.unl.edu](http://www.food.unl.edu) or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go directly to the website.

## Recipe Ideas with Pears!

### Glazed Pears (Makes 6 servings):

- **Ingredients:** 1 tablespoon margarine, 6 pears (peeled, center removed, and cut into 1-inch pieces), 2 tablespoons brown sugar (or 2 tablespoons regular sugar), and 1/4 teaspoon lemon juice
- **Directions:** Melt margarine in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the pears and cook 10 minutes or just until soft. Sprinkle pears with brown sugar and lemon juice, and continue cooking until sugar is melted, about 3-4 minutes. Stir often. Serve warm.
- **Tips:** Use glazed pears as a topping on pancakes, waffles, or hot cereal.
- **Source:** <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/food-distribution-fdd/glazed-pears>

### Pear Party Salsa (Makes 4 servings):

- **Ingredients:** 1 pear, cored and finely chopped, 1 apple, cored and finely chopped, 2 kiwifruit, cored and finely chopped, 1 orange, peeled and finely chopped, 2 tablespoons honey, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, and cinnamon graham crackers (optional).
- **Directions:** Combine pear, apple, kiwi, and orange in a medium-size bowl. Pour honey and lemon juice over fruit and gently toss. Scoop up bites of fruit salsa using bites of cinnamon graham crackers (optional).
- **Source:** <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/pear-party-salsa>

## Additional Resources & Links:

- **Harvesting and Storing Apples & Pears.** Information on when to harvest and how to store apples and pears from UNL Extensions' Backyard Farmer. <http://byf.unl.edu/StoringApplesPears>
- **UNL Nutrition Education Program – Pear Fact Sheet.** Handout includes information on pear facts, history, nutrition, and two pear recipes. <http://go.unl.edu/3bah>
- **UNL and Buy Fresh, Buy Local Pear Preservation Brochure.** Brochure includes information on syrups for canning fruit, maintaining color and flavor in canned foods, and pears-halved. <http://go.unl.edu/nyn6>
- **UNL Extension Calendar – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for December.** <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/december>

### Sources:

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2. Nutrition Education Program. Pear Fact Sheet. University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension. Accessed at: [http://necnpc.unl.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=4097691&name=DLFE-23597.pdf](http://necnpc.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=4097691&name=DLFE-23597.pdf).
3. Henne, B. (2012). December is National Pear Month. Michigan State University Extension. Accessed at: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/december\\_is\\_national\\_pear\\_month](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/december_is_national_pear_month).
4. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. (2013). Pears: How to Choose, Store, and Prepare. News you can Use: Nutrition Education with Seniors. Accessed at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/westpottawattamie/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/westpottawattamie/August%20NEWS.pdf>.

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