



# Information

March 27, 2009

Release Date: April 1, 2009

Deborah Rhoades, M.A., R.D.

Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

## **APRIL IS NATIONAL PECAN MONTH!**

Pecans...they make food yummy! Pecan waffles, butter pecan ice cream, pecan crusted tilapia. Celebrate National Pecan Month this April by trying delicious recipes from our Maryland Cooperative Extension files. This flavorful nut, grown in my home state of Georgia, offers more antioxidants than any other nut according to a 2004 study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. The American Institute for Cancer Research reports that pecans provide the phytochemical ellagic acid, which acts an antioxidant and may inhibit cancers of the lung, liver, skin and esophagus.

A serving of pecans is only one ounce, or 20 pecan halves, providing 196 calories, 2.6 grams of protein, 20 grams of fat, and 2.7 grams of fiber. An added benefit, they are cholesterol and sodium free with minimal carbohydrate content, and a good source of thiamin, magnesium, phosphorous, and zinc. You may have avoided them because of their high fat content, but consider it a bonus since the fat is mainly monounsaturated which does not raise blood cholesterol. Scientific evidence suggests that most nuts may reduce the risk of heart disease when eaten in moderation as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

For peak flavor purchase pecans in the shell which are free of cracks. They should not rattle when shaken and be heavy for their size. Store them for up to 3 months at room temperature. If shelling pecans is not realistic, you can purchase them shelled in bags or cans. Look for an expiration date and store them in the refrigerator in a sealed container since they absorb odors and can quickly turn rancid. Or you can freeze them in a moisture proof plastic bag and use as you need them.

This tasty nutritious nut can easily be incorporated into any meal or snack in a variety of ways:

- Add pecans to homemade waffles or pancakes and serve with maple syrup.
- Add to brownies, cakes, quick breads and muffins for extra crunch and texture.
- Roll a cheese ball with pecans to add flavor and for an attractive display.
- Make a cold salad with wild rice, pecans, and craisins.
- Sprinkle pecans over a lettuce salad topped with balsamic vinaigrette.
- Garnish sweet potato soup with pecans and caramelized onions.
- Baste salmon fillets with olive oil, spices, and ground pecans and grill.

## **FLORET AND PECAN SALAD**

1/3 cup chopped pecans  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
2 teaspoon chopped parsley  
3 tablespoons almond or salad oil  
1/4 cup white wine vinegar  
2 teaspoons chopped chives  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 cups canned sweet corn, drained (cooked fresh or frozen corn can be substituted)  
2 cups small cauliflower florets  
2 cups small broccoli florets  
2 cups quartered cherry tomatoes

Place pecans and 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder in zip-top plastic bag and shake.

*For dressing*, in a screw-top jar combine garlic, oil, vinegar, chives, parsley, sugar, salt and pepper. Cover and shake well to mix.

In a large mixing bowl combine corn, cauliflower, broccoli and tomatoes. Add dressing; toss gently to coat. Cover and chill for 4 to 24 hours. Stir in pecans. Serve over a bed of salad greens.

## **NUTTY CHICKEN SALAD**

3 cups diced cooked chicken  
3/4 cup green or red seedless grapes, halved  
1/2 cup sliced celery  
1/4 cup chopped pecans  
3 tablespoons sliced green onion  
3/4 cup reduced-calorie chunky blue cheese dressing

In large bowl, place all ingredients; toss to mix well. Cover and chill. Makes 4 servings.

## **PEARS WITH PECAN CREAM CHEESE STUFFING**

4 ripe pears such as D'Anjou or Bosc  
8 ounces low-fat cream cheese  
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans

Core pears from the bottom. "Rinse" the interior cut surfaces with lemon juice to prevent browning. In a small bowl, combine cream cheese and pecans. Stuff pear centers with cream cheese mixture, being sure to fill pear centers completely. Wrap each pear in plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled. To serve, slice pears horizontally and arrange on platter lined with lettuce leaves. Serves about 6. Nutritional Analysis per serving: 50 calories, 2.3 gm total fat, 0.2 gm saturated fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 1.1 gm fiber, 54 mg sodium.

## **LEMON PECAN BISCOTTI**

Parchment paper for the pan  
1 package (18.25 ozs.) lemon cake mix  
1/2 cup canola oil  
2 large eggs  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Place the cake mix, oil, eggs, flour and nuts in a large mixing bowl. Blend with an electric mixer on low speed until well blended, 3 to 4 minutes. Stop and scrape down sides of bowl with a rubber spatula. The dough should come together into a ball. Transfer it to the prepared baking sheet. With floured hands, shape the dough into a rectangle about 14 inches long by 4 inches wide by 1/2-inch thick. Mound the dough so it is slightly higher in the center. Bake until it feels firm when lightly pressed with your finger or a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 10 minutes.

Use a sharp serrated bread knife to slice the rectangle on the diagonal into 1-inch thick slices for a total of 14 slices. Carefully turn these slices onto their sides, using the slicing knife to arrange them on the same baking sheet and return to oven.

Bake 10 minutes more. Turn oven off and let biscotti remain in oven until they are crisp, for 30 to 40 minutes more. Remove from oven and transfer biscotti to a cooling rack to cool completely,

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to several weeks.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences. For more information about the Frederick County Extension Office check out our website <http://Frederick.umd.edu>

Equal access programs/Equal opportunity employers

DR:ls