

Beneficial Bites



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**Pecans Unshelled**

Pecans known to most as nuts are actually not nuts at all but a botanical fruit known as “drupe”.

 **HISTORY** Pecans have played a large role in diet and cuisine. Many Native American tribes relied on pecans as a staple food in the fall and winter months and even traded pecans. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish and French colonists began cultivating pecans and eventually began exporting them to other parts of the world. The first U.S. pecan planting took place in Long Island, NY in 1772. Pecans still play a large role in the culture and traditions in the southern part of the United States.

**Health Benefits** Pecans contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals – including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, several B vitamins and zinc just to name a few. One ounce of pecans provides 10 percent of the recommended Daily Value for fiber. Pecans are also a natural, high-quality source of protein and energy which contains very few carbohydrates and no cholesterol. Pecans are also naturally **sodium-free, rich** in antioxidants and a good source of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats.

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Created by: Ellen Ellingsworth, MS, UW-Stout Dietetic Intern

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**What’s NUTS about Pecans?**

* Pecan trees usually range in height from 70 to 100 feet, but some trees grow as tall as 150 feet or higher. Native pecan trees – those over 150 years old – have trunks more than three feet in diameter.
* Some of the larger pecan shellers process 150,000 pounds of pecans each day. That’s enough to make 300,000 pecan pies!
* The U.S. produces about 80 percent of the world’s pecan crop.
* It is speculated that pecans were used to produce a fermented intoxicating drink called “Powcohicora” (where the word “hickory” comes from)

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 **Check out the April Menu for these “Pecan” Foods**

Pecan Pie Bars

Pecan Fruit Yogurt Parfait

Pecan Pie

Red Grape/Pecan/Cream Cheese Salad

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