



Produce of the  
Month

# Pears

## Welcome!

Pacific Northwest canned pears are a popular treat throughout the United States, with the average American consuming 3.67 pounds of the fruit every year. All Pacific Northwest canned pears are a variety called Bartlett, invented by English schoolmaster John Stair in the 18th century. Bartlett pears are ideal for canning because they maintain their sweet flavor and unmistakable texture, which is all the more important considering the short harvest season for pears...a mere

four weeks beginning in early August. Because Bartlett pears are so perfect for canning, we can enjoy them year round instead of only a few weeks each year.

Pears are a great addition to any meal, as they can be incorporated into breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert and, of course, snacks. And since Pacific Northwest canned pears need no preparation, they can fit perfectly into anyone's hectic schedule, something



we can all appreciate. Of course, often times we associate such convenient foods with less than desirable nutrition, but pears are a delightful exception to the rule. They are a good source of carbohydrates, potassium and fiber, and are virtually fat and cholesterol-free! On top of that, a 1/2 cup serving rings in at under 100 calories! You might just say that pears are one of nature's most "pear-fect" fruits!



## Pears: Historically Speaking

While the Bartlett pear used for Pacific Northwest canned pears are a relatively recent addition to the pear family, having been developed in 1765, the history of pears goes back further. Much further. In fact, Feng Li, a prominent Chinese diplomat, abandoned his responsibilities to start a commercial venture selling a variety of fruits, including pears, 7,000 years ago! The Greek poet Homer praised the fruit roughly 2,800 years ago when he described it as "a gift of the gods." Later, the Romans developed more than 50 different varieties of pears and began cultivating them all over the European continent.

Fast forward to 1812, when a man named Enoch Bartlett "discovered" the pear variety that, up until that point, had been known as the Williams pear, named for a horticulturist who further developed the variety created by John Stair in the 18th century. Unaware of the variety's true name, Bartlett began distributing the pears using his own surname, which stuck in the fledgling United States, although much of the world still refers to the variety as the Williams pear. It was later in the 1800s (1849 to be specific) that Bartlett pears made their journey west with the California Gold Rush. Today, nearly 150,000 tons of Bartlett pears are harvested and canned each and every year in the Pacific Northwest. That's a whopping 30 million pounds!

## A Tasty Treat To Try At Home

### Baked Pears

- 1 pint** Apple Juice
- 5 ounces** Granulated Sugar
- 1/8 tsp** Ground Cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp** Ground Cloves
- 3 tbsp + 1/2 tsp** Cornstarch
- 1/4 cup** Cold Water
- 6 Fresh Pears**

#### METHOD

1. In a sauce pan, combine apple juice, sugar, cinnamon and cloves. Bring to a rolling boil. Skim off foam.
2. Combine cornstarch and water. Stir into juice mixture. Simmer for 2 minutes.
3. Core pears. Peel 1/3 of the way down. Place 24 pears, peeled side up, in each steamtable pan. Pour 9 1/2 cups sauce over each pan.
4. Bake in a 375 degree F. standard oven for 45 to 60 minutes, basting frequently.

**Portion Size: 1 pear with 2 ounce ladle sauce.**



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## It's "Pear-fectly" Healthy

There is no doubt that canned pears are more than just a delicious snack or addition to any meal...they're a bona fide champion of health. Pears are a source of many different vitamins and minerals, particularly potassium and copper, and are high in fiber and carbohydrates. In the case of pears, the carbohydrates are primarily in the form of glucose, which is the main energy source for most of the cells in your body. Potassium helps manage nerve and muscle function, while also keeping body fluids in balance and regulating blood pressure. Meanwhile, fiber promotes digestive health and also has positive effects on blood sugar and blood cholesterol. The best part is, all of this nutrition is available from a food that is virtually free of fat and cholesterol and has less than 100 calories per serving. And thanks to the canning process, you can enjoy fresh, ripe pears 365 days a year! Sources: Pacific Northwest Canned Pears, NutritionData.com

## Did You Know?

- Bartlett pears are not only ideal for canning, but respond particularly well to the volcanic soil prominent in the Wenatchee, Yakima and Hood River valleys of the Pacific Northwest.
- There are more than 3,000 varieties of pears, and the most popular pear in the United States is...you guessed it...the Bartlett.
- Scholars believe pears were first cultivated in the mountain valleys between Russia and Turkey.
- Pears are harvested when they are fully mature, but not yet ripe. This keeps the fruit's flavor at its peak.

Sources: Pacific Northwest Canned Pears, USA Pears



## Test Your Pear Knowledge!

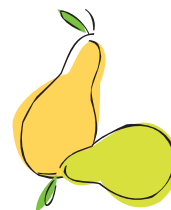
Let's find out just how much you know now about pears!

- 1) Bartlett pears are ideal for canning, but are difficult to grow in volcanic soil. *True or False?*
- 2) The Bartlett pair was created by an English schoolmaster named James Stair. *True or False?*
- 3) Canned pears are high in potassium and fiber, but low in calories. *True or False?*
- 4) There are about 2,000 varieties of pears known to man. *True or False?*
- 5) Bartlett pears made their journey to the Pacific Northwest during the California Gold Rush. *True or False?*
- 6) Most of the world knows Bartlett pears as Williams pears. *True or False?*
- 7) A Chinese diplomat named Feng Li abandoned his position to start a business selling fruits, including pears, 7,000 years ago. *True or False?*
- 8) Pears make an appearance in Homer's epic poem "The Odyssey", growing in the orchard of Alcinoos. *True or False?*
- 9) Each year, about 30 million pounds of Bartlett pears are harvested and canned in the Pacific Northwest. *True or False?*
- 10) Pears are a member of the rose family (Rosaceae). *True or False?*

## Notable Quotable

"There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed..."  
- Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

"Eating pears cleans the teeth."  
- Korean proverb



Answers to Test Your Pear Knowledge:  
1: False, 2: True, 3: True, 4: False, 5: True, 6: True, 7: True, 8: True, 9: True, 10: True

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