

**Pecans USA : America's favourite nut / U.S.A. Pecan Press Office.**

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# PECANS<sup>®</sup>



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## America's Flavourful Nut



When and how the pecan originated remains a mystery. A relative of the walnut and hickory nut, but thought by many to be the superior, pecan trees are believed to have grown wild along rivers with flowing waters. Pecans are the only native American nut.

We do know that long before the discovery of America, Indian tribes inhabiting the Mississippi River area were fully aware of the value of the pecan.

Indeed Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca, wrote in 1541, "it is the subsistence of the people for two months in the year without any other thing".

The Indians were a nomadic people but would always return to regular campsites. Here they would plant pecan seedlings in order to provide a vital source of food for future generations.

Early inhabitants of the New World took full advantage of pecan trees growing wild throughout the Southern regions.

Commercial production of the pecan did not begin until around 1800. We know, however, that George Washington maintained a large pecan grove at Mount Vernon in 1774 and regarded pecans, which he referred to as "Mississippi nuts", as his favourite snack.

### THE PECAN TODAY

Pecans are grown throughout the southern half of the United States – Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, South Carolina, Alabama and Florida.

Harvesting takes place from October through December and sometimes extends into February and March of the following year. The nuts are separated after harvest from sticks and other debris then graded according to size and quality. The nuts are shelled individually at highly sophisticated shelling plants to the highest health and quality standards.

The U.S.A. produces over 90% of the total world crop.

### SELECTING PECANS

Shelled premium pecans are fairly uniform in colour and size. They should look plump and be golden brown in colour.

When buying unshelled pecans remember that there is no connection between the size of a nut and its quality. Look for nuts that are clean and free of splits, deep cracks or holes (and any staining). The kernel should not rattle in the shell.

When baking with pecans it is sensible to buy them already shelled saving preparation time and unnecessary effort. Shelled pecans also provide an instant energy giving snack.

If you have bought pecans in their shell remember that a pound (500g) of unshelled pecans will give you approximately 8oz (225g) of pecan nutmeats.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Pecans are a good source of protein and important vitamins and minerals. These include iron, calcium and the B vitamins as well as potassium and phosphorous. Pecans also provide dietary fibre. 1oz. (28g) contains 190 calories. The fat content in a pecan is made up entirely of polyunsaturated fats and is ideal for those watching their cholesterol intake.

## PECAN BANANA BREAD

A wonderfully moist teabread combining the smoothness of banana with the crunch of the pecan nut.

*3oz. (75g) butter*  
*4oz. (100g) soft brown sugar*  
*1 egg, beaten*  
*4oz. (100g) plain flour*  
*4oz. (100g) wholewheat flour*  
*2 tsp. baking powder*  
*4 medium bananas, mashed*  
*3oz. (75g) U.S.A. pecans, chopped*

Makes 2 × 1lb loaves or 1 × 2lb loaf

Cream the butter with the sugar until fluffy. Beat in the egg a little at a time. Add flour and baking powder. Fold into creamed mixture. Mixture will be stiff at this stage. Fold in bananas and pecans.

Spoon into greased, bottom lined tin(s). Bake in a preheated oven 180°C, 300°F, or Gas Mark 4 for approximately 45-55 minutes.

Cool in tin for ten minutes then turn out onto a cooling rack.

Serve sliced and buttered.

## PECANS WORCESTERSHIRE

Easy to prepare. A spicy snack to serve with drinks.

*1oz. (25g) butter*  
*2 fl.oz. Worcestershire sauce*  
*2-3 drops Tabasco sauce*  
*8oz. (225g) U.S.A. pecans*  
*salt to taste*

Melt butter, add both sauces. Remove from the heat and add pecans. Stir and mix well. Allow pecans to soak in the mixture, stirring from time to time, for five minutes. Place pecans on a baking sheet in a single layer.

Bake in a preheated oven 200°C, 400°F or Gas Mark 6 for 10-15 minutes taking care pecans do not burn. Turn the pecan layer halfway through baking.

Remove from the oven, drain on absorbent kitchen roll and sprinkle to taste with salt.

# RECIPES

## PECAN AND PINEAPPLE STUFFING

This stuffing can be used for joints of lamb, pork or chicken.

- 8oz. (225g) can pineapple chunks
- 3oz. (75g) U.S.A. pecans, chopped salt and pepper
- 1/2 tsp. dried rosemary
- 1oz. (25g) butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3oz. (75g) fresh breadcrumbs

Drain the pineapple reserving the juice. Chop finely and mix with the pecans, rosemary, salt and pepper. Melt the butter and fry the onion until softened, add to the mixture. Add breadcrumbs and mix well. Add a little pineapple juice if mixture is too stiff.

## CRUNCHY SALAD

An enjoyable variety of textures.

- 1 banana, sliced
- 1 red eating apple, chopped
- 8oz. (225g) can apricots, drained and juice reserved
- 3 sticks celery, chopped
- 3oz. (75g) U.S.A. pecans, chopped
- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. natural yogurt
- 1 tbsp. apricot juice salt and pepper

Mix together the banana, apple, apricots, celery and pecans.

Mix together the mayonnaise, yogurt and apricot juice, salt and pepper. Add to the salad and mix well.

Serve as a side dish.

## PECAN PIE

One of America's most popular desserts traditionally made with corn syrup which is only obtainable from specialist food stores here. However, maple syrup works just as well.

- 4oz. (100g) brown sugar
- 6oz. (150g) maple syrup  
(or corn syrup if available)
- 3 small eggs, beaten
- 3 tbsp. butter, melted
- 4oz. (100g) U.S.A. pecans
- 7-8 inch uncooked pie case

Heat sugar and syrup together until sugar dissolves. Cool slightly. Add syrup to the beaten eggs, whisking constantly. Add remaining ingredients. Pour the mixture into the pie case and bake at 220°C, 425°F or Gas Mark 7 for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 180°C, 350°F or Gas Mark 4 and bake for a further 35 minutes.

Serve warm or cold with whipped cream.

## PECAN OAT COOKIES

Stored in an airtight tin these cookies keep well. The mixture makes 30 cookies.

- 4oz. (100g) butter or margarine
- 4oz. (100g) soft light brown sugar
- 3 tbsp. golden syrup
- 3 tbsp. black treacle
- 1 egg, beaten
- 4oz. (100g) wholewheat flour
- 2oz. (50g) porridge oats
- 2oz. (50g) U.S.A. pecans, chopped  
(plus extra for topping)
- 1oz. (25g) California raisins

Place the fat, sugar, syrup and treacle in a bowl. Beat until the mixture is light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the egg a little at a time.

Gently stir in the flour, oats, pecans and raisins until they are evenly mixed. Place heaped teaspoons of the mixture, well apart onto greased baking sheets. Press them down slightly and sprinkle with a few chopped pecans.

Bake at 180°C, 350°F or Gas Mark 4 for 12-15 minutes until the cookies have risen and spread slightly. Cool for a minute on the trays before removing to a cooling rack.

## PECAN FUDGE

This will freeze well either in slabs or portion squares.

4oz. (100g) *butter*  
8fl. oz. (200ml) *milk*  
2 *dessert spoons golden syrup*  
2lb (1kg) *granulated sugar*  
1 *large can condensed milk*  
1 *tsp vanilla essence*  
4oz. (100g) *U.S.A. pecans, chopped*

Place the butter and milk in a large heavy based pan and heat gently to melt the butter. Add the sugar and golden syrup and dissolve the sugar over a low heat, stirring occasionally.

Add the condensed milk and bring the mixture to the boil. Boil rapidly until it reaches the soft boil stage on a sugar thermometer or a little dropped into a saucer of cold water forms a soft ball between the fingers. This will take about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla and pecans. beat for about 5 minutes until mixture thickens and turns fudgy. Spread over a greased shallow tray and leave to cool.

Cut into 1 inch squares when set.

## PECAN AND PIMENTO SANDWICH SPREAD

Liven up sandwiches with this delicious combination.

4oz. (100g) *U.S.A. pecans, chopped*  
4oz. (100g) *canned pimentos (sweet red peppers), drained and chopped*  
3oz. (75g) *cream cheese*  
4fl. oz. *real mayonnaise*

Combine all the ingredients and beat well until thoroughly blended.



## PECAN TIPS

### Shelling

You will find it easier to crack open the pecan shell if you first cover the unshelled pecans in boiling water. Let the nuts stay immersed for 30 minutes then remove and cool. This method also helps to keep the nutmeats whole on cracking the shell.

### Storing

Pecans, when stored properly, are long lasting and hold their freshness well.

Unshelled pecans can be stored in a bag, the shell providing the protection. If kept in a cool, dry place they will stay fresh for about six months.

Shelled pecan nuts should be kept clean and dry in airtight containers such as freezer bags with ties, freezer cartons or storage jars. They are best kept cold either in the fridge or ideally in the freezer. Pecans will remain fresh for nine months if refrigerated or up to two years if frozen.

Whether chilled or frozen, pecans should be allowed to reach room temperature before being used in a recipe.

## QUICK IDEAS

Here are a few more ideas for using U.S.A. pecans to add flavour, texture and nutrition.

Knead chopped pecans into bread dough.

Combine chopped pecans with chocolate, caramel or strawberry flavoured ice cream sauces.

Chopped pecans add extra crunch to stir fried dishes.

Mix equal quantities of pecans, California raisins and sunflower seeds for a quick snack.

Make a quick cake topping by brushing cake with honey and garnishing with pecan halves.

Add to any vegetarian dish for extra protein.

We hope you will enjoy the recipes in this leaflet. If you have a favourite recipe using U.S.A. pecans we would like to hear from you.

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