

Additional Resources

UC Master Food Preservers of Sonoma County – Pomegranates & Persimmons:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/MFPSC/Seasonal_Food_Preservation/

Utah State University Cooperative Extension pomegranate fact sheet with preservation tips: http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1211&context=extension_curall

USDA information on pomegranates, including nutrition information:

<https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/resources/nutrition-education-materials/seasonal-produce-guide/pomegranates>

UC Davis Fruit and Nut Research & Information table of pomegranate varieties:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/btfnr/fruitnutproduction/Pomegranate/Pomegranate_Cultivar_Table/

Pomegranates are an acidic fruit; pH = 2.93 to 3.20. Clemson University table of the pH (acidity) of common foods:

https://www.clemson.edu/extension/food/food2market/documents/ph_of_common_foods.pdf

Dehydrating Pomegranate Arils (“Anardana”)

Drying foods is a simple, inexpensive, and space-saving way to preserve food safely by removing the moisture that would support bacterial growth. Although many traditional American preserving guides do not recommend drying pomegranate because of the seeds, dried arils are used in many other cuisines and are sold commercially. Even dried pomegranate peels are used in Indian cooking, teas, and skin care products. Pomegranate juice can also be mixed with fruit pulps to make tasty, dried fruit leathers.

Dried seeds (in Persian, “anardana”) have a deeper, more molasses-like flavor than fresh arils or juice. They are used widely in South Asian and Middle Eastern cooking as a garnish and sweet-tart ingredient in both savory and sweet dishes, such as on yogurt, ice cream, or hummus, in curries and stews, bread, pilafs, and even trail mix. Anardana can be substituted for lemon, dried limes, or tamarind. Fully dried arils can be ground into a sour spice and used like sumac.

Instructions:

1. Use clean, firm arils, preferably from varieties with seeds you don't mind eating, *e.g.*, the soft-seeded *parfianka*.
2. Spread arils on trays in a single layer. There is no need to pretreat the seeds. You can use solid silicone or plastic trays that fit your dehydrator or start directly on mesh trays. Solid silicone trays minimize initial sticking; you can spray a light coat of cooking spray on plastic trays or mesh to decrease sticking.
3. Dehydrate between 110° - 140°F for 12 - 36 hours. Do not exceed 140°F; that will “cook” rather than dehydrate the fruit. Total time will vary greatly depending on the size of the arils, temperature, solid or mesh trays, and the dehydrator. Once the seeds are dry to the touch, loosen them from the trays and “stir” occasionally for more even drying. If you start on solid trays, shifting to mesh after the arils are partially dry will also speed drying. To speed drying times, start at higher temperatures, then when close to dry, reduce the heat and monitor closely. Dry until the seeds no longer stick to each other; reducing moisture to 20% or less is sufficiently dehydrated for preservation. If you intend to powder the seeds, continue until the seeds are brittle and can be finely ground in a coffee or spice grinder.
4. When dry, turn off dehydrator and cool completely, then immediately transfer to an airtight glass or plastic jar. Do not package when warm to avoid “sweating” the fruit.
5. “Condition” the fruit to equalize the moisture among the pieces and check for sufficient dryness. Shake the sealed jar of arils every day for 7-10 days. Dehydrated arils should “rattle” when shaken. If condensation develops, or the seeds become sticky or damp, dehydrate the whole batch again.
6. Label jar(s) and date; store in a cool, dark place. Adding a small packet of silica gel / desiccant helps maintain dryness. Refrigerating or freezing lengthens shelf life. Best consumed in a year. Discard if any mold develops.

Pomegranate Syrup (Grenadine) Recipe

Yield: ~ 1 pint grenadine

Ingredients:

2 cups pomegranate juice

1 cup sugar

(optional) 2 drops orange water

Instructions:

1. Combine juice with sugar and stir to dissolve sugar.
2. Heat just to simmering and simmer three to five minutes.
3. (Optional) Add 2 drops of orange water.
4. Cool.
5. Store in the refrigerator for one to two weeks or freeze.

Use as toppings for ice cream or chilled fruits, or in beverages.

Recipe Source: Preserve the Harvest, Pomegranates, Utah State University, Utah Cooperative Extension Service, June 2005

Pomegranate Molasses Recipe

Yield: ~1 cup molasses

Ingredients:

4 cups pomegranate juice (fresh or commercial bottled juice with no additives)

1/3 cup white sugar (can omit or use up to 1 cup, to taste)

4 Tbs lemon juice (can omit or use up to 1 cup, to taste)

Instructions:

Note: It's possible to make pomegranate molasses with just pomegranate juice with no additions, but it's recommended to add some sugar as this will shorten the time needed to reduce the liquid to a syrup stage, as well as increase the yield of molasses (*i.e.*, lower amounts of sugar will require more of the initial liquid to be evaporated). Start with the suggested amount of sugar. If you prefer a sweeter molasses, add additional sugar as the mixture reduces in volume. (Taste the product as it reduces.) The lemon juice is also optional, but it helps retain the color of the original juice, as well as add flavor and tartness.

Combine all ingredients in a large, heavy saucepan (a larger surface area will reduce the time needed to reduce to a syrup)

Turn on the stove and heat the mixture, stirring continuously until the sugar is dissolved. Adjust the heat to maintain a very low simmer (190° - 200°F). **It's very important to keep the juice from boiling during the process.** Boiling will cause the product to turn brown and it will lose its fresh pomegranate flavor. An occasional boiling bubble is ok but lower the heat if the liquid starts to bubble vigorously.

Continue to stir frequently until the liquid has reduced to about 25% of the original volume and is syrupy. When ready, the liquid should coat a spoon. Note that the syrup will get thicker when it cools. It will take 2-3 hours to reduce 4 cups of initial liquid to 1 cup of molasses.

Pour the hot molasses into a sterilized jar* and store in the refrigerator for up to a year, or freeze, leaving sufficient headroom to accommodate expansion upon freezing.

*(To sterilize a jar, put the jar in a pot, cover completely with water, and boil for 10 minutes if you live at an elevation below 1000 feet. Add 1 minute of boiling time for each additional 1000 feet of elevation.)

Low Sugar Pomegranate Jelly with Pomona Pectin

Yield: 4 to 5 half-pints

Before You Begin: Prepare calcium water: combine 1/2 teaspoon calcium powder with 1/2 cup water in a small, clear jar with a lid. Shake well. Store extra calcium water in the refrigerator for future use.

Ingredients:

4 cups pomegranate juice

4 teaspoons calcium water

1/2 cup up to 1 cup room temperature honey, or 3/4 cup up to 2 cups sugar

4 teaspoons lemon juice (optional)

3 to 4 teaspoons Pomona's Pectin powder (3 teaspoons gives a softer gel; 4 teaspoons gives a firmer jell.)

Instructions:

1. Heat clean jars in canner. Wash lids and rings in warm soapy water and set aside.
2. Measure juice into an 8-quart saucepan. Add calcium water and lemon juice; mix well.
3. Measure sugar or honey into a bowl. Thoroughly mix pectin powder into sweetener. Set aside.
4. Boil juice mixture at a full boil. Add pectin-sweetener mixture, stirring vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes to dissolve the pectin until the mixture returns to a full boil. Remove from heat.
5. Ladle hot jelly into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe rims with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids until fingertip tight.
6. Process 10 minutes in boiling-water or steam canner at 0-6,000', 15 minutes above 6,000'.
7. Remove jars and cool. Check lids for seal after 24 hours. Lid should not flex up and down when center is pressed.

Recipe source: USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2015 & pomonapectin.com 2013

Bonus recipe: Persian Mushrooms in Pomegranate

Ingredients

1 Tablespoon unsalted butter (preferably clarified)

6 cups mushrooms (preferably crimini, or part button and portobello or a mixture of wild mushrooms)

salt

freshly ground black pepper

1 cup pomegranate juice (alt: port-like wine)

1/4 cup pomegranate molasses

1/2 cup heavy cream (alternatives: nut butter, sauteed onion, or almond milk)

lots of fresh mint

Instructions:

1. Clean mushrooms. Trim as necessary. Depending on their size, quarter or slice.
2. Heat wok or large skillet on highest heat. Add butter and roll around sides. Add mushrooms and toss vigorously. They should literally start to "squeak" as they brown.
3. After most have some browned edges, add generous salt and pepper. Keep tossing and let some of the liquid that the mushrooms will release with the salt boil off.
4. Add the pomegranate juice and boil down to concentrate till most of the liquid is almost gone, stirring occasionally. (While you're waiting, wash, dry and chop your mint.)
5. Add the molasses and let it boil down a bit more. Briefly turn off the heat or remove the pan and stir in the cream.
6. Return to heat and reduce until the sauce is thick or seems suitable for how you're serving it. Taste and correct seasonings.
7. Remove from heat. Stir in lots of chopped mint (about 1/3 cup AFTER chopping is not too much). Serve with whole mint for garnish.

Serving suggestion: mound on crackers or bread slices as an appetizer.

Recipe source: Adapted from a 1995 recipe from India Joze, a now-closed restaurant in Santa Cruz, CA. See <https://www.indiajoze.com/recipes.html>