

Pomegranates Are So Versatile
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The pomegranate is a fruit with many delicious and innovative uses, bursting with distinct flavor and unique health benefits to food and drink recipes. Arils (seed sacs) are perfect for tossing in salads, stirring into yogurt, sprinkling over cereal, garnishing cocktails or enjoying on their own as a delicious, healthy snack. Freshly squeezed pomegranate juice is ideal for glazes, cocktails and marinades.

For eating or juicing, select pomegranates by weight, not by color. Pomegranates are only picked when they are perfectly ripe on the inside. The outside of a ripe pomegranate can vary from pink to a deep ruby red. Keep in mind that the heavier the pomegranates are, the more juice they contain. For decorating, select pomegranates by color, size and general appearance.

Pomegranates may seem intimidating, but they are easy to open. This efficient procedure for opening a pomegranate has six simple steps:

- **Cut** – With a sharp paring knife, cut off the top about a half inch below the crown.
- **Score** – Once the top has been removed, four to six sections of the pomegranate divided by white membrane will be visible. With the knife's point, score the skin along each section.
- **Open** – Using both hands, carefully pull the pomegranate apart, breaking it into smaller sections.
- **Loosen** – Over a bowl of water, loosen the arils and allow them to drop freely into the bowl. The arils will sink to the bottom of the bowl and the membrane will float to the top.
- **Scoop** – Use a spoon to scoop out the pieces of white membrane that have floated to the top of the water.
- **Strain** – Pour the arils and remaining liquid through a strainer.

Unopened pomegranates can last up to one month on the counter or two months in the refrigerator. Fresh arils can last two weeks in a sealed plastic container in the refrigerator and frozen arils can last for many months in the freezer.

To freeze pomegranate arils, spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Place in a freezer for two hours or until frozen. Transfer frozen arils to a re-sealable plastic bag or container. Frozen arils can be enjoyed well after the season has ended.

To juice a pomegranate: Cut a fresh pomegranate in half as you would a grapefruit. To juice a pomegranate, you can either use a hand-press citrus juicer or an electronic juicer.

Here are some recipes from Utah State University Extension/Washington County.

Dixie Salad:

There are several versions of Dixie Salad. Here's one to try:

2 large pomegranates 3/4 cup raisins

3 apples 3/4 cup chopped almonds

Whipped cream with vanilla and sugar added

The above amount may vary according to your taste and the amount of people you serve.

You can add bananas and pecans or walnuts, and some like pineapple chunks.

Dixie Pomegranate Salsa

1 pomegranate, seeded

2 oranges, peeled and cut into small pieces

1 bunch cilantro

1 Chile jalapeño, chopped

1 tomato, diced

½ tsp ground cumin

1-2 Tbsp lime juice

Mix and chill for 2 hours.

If you have any questions about safe home food preservation, be sure to call the Master Food Preservers and leave a message at (530) 621-5506. A Master Food Preserver will get back to you with an answer. For more information about the public education classes and activities, go to the Master Food Preserver website at

http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/.