

National Almond Day! February 16

Go Nuts for Almonds



Whether you're using almond milk, paste, flour, butter, oil, or meal, it's obvious that foodies love the little nut. Almonds offer a delicate flavour yet a rather pronounced texture to foods, especially if toasted.

From spiced or sweetened almonds for snacking, as a crust on chicken or fish, in cookies, cakes and granola bars, marzipan, torrone, on salads, in cereal or yogurt, on green beans or coating a cheese ball, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

Those on gluten-free diets love almonds because they're a great substitute for bread crumbs and some flours.

There are about 25 major almond varieties produced in California orchards. They are categorized into five broad classifications based on distinguishing characteristics such as size and shape. The majority of almond production in California falls into the following three major classifications: Nonpareil, California, and Mission.

A one-ounce, 160-calorie handful of almonds is an excellent source of vitamin E and magnesium. That quantity also provides 12 per cent of your daily protein allowance. Plus, almonds offer potassium, calcium and iron. Some say they're good at preventing osteoporosis as one ounce or about 20 almonds contain as much calcium as 1/4 cup of milk.

It's also believed that eating almonds regulates your blood pressure because they're high in potassium and low in sodium. They also help in keeping your cholesterol levels in check.