party with pomegranate!

Bursting with flavor, this tangy, sweet fruit makes a festive alternative to cranberries for your holiday dishes

By Kelly Rubert

pomegranate in their regalia and crests. But it is the amazing health benefits of this ruby-red globe that have undoubtedly given pomegranates their much-revered place in history.

Traditional practitioners of Ayurveda use every part of the pomegranate plant for medicinal purposes, and it appears that they are right about the fruit’s clinical benefits. Pomegranates contain three times the antioxidants of green tea and red wine, and current research shows that pomegranates are the only fruit rich in all three major antioxidants: tannins, anthocyanins, and ellagic acid. In addition, one pomegranate provides about 40 percent of an adult’s recommended daily intake of vitamin C and is a good source of vitamins A and E, folic acid, and potassium.

Pomegranates also contain estrone, a natural form of estrogen. This can be a powerful alternative to artificial hormone replacement therapy for women during menopause to eliminate hot flashes and mood swings. Current Israeli studies show that pomegranate juice may prevent cancers from forming and can actually destroy breast cancer cells without damaging any healthy surrounding tissue. For men, the pomegranate contains a compound that lowers levels of prostate

DID YOU KNOW?
It’s best to select a pomegranate by its weight, not by its color. Pomegranates can vary from pink to ruby red.

orange salad with pomegranates
Serves 6

The inspiration for this salad is North Africa, where pomegranates are used in a variety of creative ways. The salad’s secret is its startling interplay of flavors: the tartness of the fruit, the onion—the infusion of the onion is an important step, so do not skip it—and most importantly, the saltiness of the olives. The lemon removes the sharpness of the raw onion and colors it pink, an important visual note in the salad’s appearance.

From our sister publication
Vegetarian Times

1 cup red onion slices, sliced paper-thin and broken into strips
1/2 cup lemon juice
6 large Valencia oranges (4 lb.)
5 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbs. pomegranate vinegar
1 medium-size cucumber, pared and diced (1 cup)
1 cup pomegranate arils
1 cup (4 oz.) black oil-cured olives, preferably Moroccan
1 Tbs. finely chopped mint

1. Marinate onion slices in lemon juice in bowl 1 hour.
2. Peel oranges, and cut into thin, round slices. Cut rounds in half and pick out seeds.
3. Place oranges in large bowl, drain onion of all excess liquid, and add to oranges. Sprinkle mixture with ground black pepper to taste.
4. Combine oil and vinegar, and pour over oranges. Cover, and set aside in cool place 30 minutes.
5. Add cucumber, pomegranate arils, and olives. Adjust seasoning, scatter mint over top, and serve.

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specific antigen, which may help fight prostate cancer when used in tandem with traditional therapies.

The pomegranate also has great value and diversity when it comes to cooking. The juice of the arils (seed cases) can be used as a sweetener, a flavoring, an acidic agent, or as a base for many recipes and drinks. Pomegranate was (and still is) widely used in the Middle East, the Mediterranean region, India, and Asia in many traditional recipes before tomatoes became widely available.

Pomegranates can be stored for several days at room temperature or for up to two weeks when refrigerated. The arils can be placed in an airtight container and frozen for up to seven months, and used for flavor and color in a variety of dishes, such as our festive Orange Salad with Pomegranates.

Continued on 64

product examples

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THE 411 ON POMEGRANATE SUPPLEMENTS

We asked Gene Bruno, MHS, Jarrow Formulas consultant and Dean of Academics at Huntington College of Health Sciences, for the lowdown on this powerful fruit.

Q: What types of pomegranate supplements are available, and which are the most effective?
A: Pomegranate supplements are available in freeze-dried encapsulated powder and dehydrated encapsulated powder. But concentrated juice from the arils of pomegranate, one of nature’s richest sources of polyphenolic antioxidants, is the most potent way to use pomegranate. It has a high ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) value of 1,245.

Q: Are many people allergic to pomegranate?
A: It is possible for pomegranate fruit or seeds to cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. However, pomegranate allergy is not commonplace, and those who have experienced a reaction have tended to be allergic to other plants as well.

Q: At what age can children begin to eat pomegranate?
A: The seeds of pomegranates could become lodged in the throats of very young children, and so should probably be avoided until the child is 4 or 5. However, pomegranate juice can be consumed by any child who can drink fruit juice.

Q: Are there any medications that react badly with pomegranate?
A: There are no documented incidences of pomegranate reacting with drugs. However, from a strictly theoretical standpoint, consuming pomegranate juice with ACE inhibitors might have additive effects since pomegranate juice is thought to have ACE inhibitor-like effects.