

Take a Taste Adventure: Explore Nuts in International Cuisines

Put the “world on your plate.” Enjoy nuts in Spanish tapas, African stews, Middle Eastern pilaf, Indian curries, Asian stir-fries, Caribbean salads and much more. Nuts add distinctive flavors and textures to delectable dishes around the globe.

Wherever your culinary passport takes you, nuts deliver more than flavor. The protein, healthy fats (mostly unsaturated), fiber, vitamins, minerals and good-for-you phytonutrients in nuts make nourishing ethnic dishes family-pleasing winners.

As a global “foodie,” enjoy nuts:

- ❖ as *easy snacks*: try almonds and hazelnuts as Spanish tapas or Greek meze, dried fruit with nuts (e.g., pistachios, almonds, walnuts) as Middle Eastern after-dinner treats; toasted, salted or candied nuts as an Indo-Pakistani nibble and Norwegian volnutter og os (two walnut halves filled with blue cheese);
- ❖ as flavor and texture accents in *traditional baked foods*, such as pumpernickel bread with raisins and pecans, flatbread sprinkled with thyme and chopped pistachio nuts, German stollen with dried fruit and almonds and all-American banana bread with walnuts or pecans;
- ❖ as ingredients that uniquely define ethnic dishes *anywhere in your meals*.



Asian Noodles with Chicken & Cashews

In Hearty Soups and Stews

Grind almonds, peanuts or cashews and add them to soups and stews. Ground nuts make great thickeners. Try these ideas inspired by the global kitchen:

- ❖ *Refreshing chilled Spanish soup, ajo blanco*, prepared with ground almonds, garlic, onions, dry bread and broth;
- ❖ *West African groundnut stew*, featuring peanuts (ground to a paste), tomatoes and chile peppers; sometimes braised with onions, garlic, dried shrimp, other vegetables and beef, too;
- ❖ *Brazil nut soup (sopa de castanha do Pará)* from Brazil, made with broth, cream, spices and pomegranate juice.

At home, garnish curries or lentil or pea soup with chopped peanuts; top vegetable bisques with toasted and chopped pecans or walnuts.

In Crisp, Colorful Salads

Add more nutrition. Toss salads with nuts, or dress them up with creamy nut dressings. From the “global menu” enjoy:

- ❖ *Gado-gado salad from Indonesia*, made with colorful, crisp or blanched vegetables, shredded cabbage and sliced hard-cooked eggs, drizzled with spicy peanut sauce;
- ❖ *Caribbean peanut-rice salad*: seasoned rice, tossed with lime juice and peanut oil, and topped with citrus fruit and chopped roasted peanuts.

Add an international touch to your salads by pairing fruit and nuts with greens; try apples and walnuts with Boston or leaf lettuce, pears

or strawberries and pecans with baby spinach or oranges and sliced almonds with romaine.

In Tasty Spreads and Dips

Tap into the creamy qualities that nuts add to tasty dips and spreads:

- ❖ *Hawaiian macadamia nut hummus*, with mashed macadamia nuts, chickpeas and seasonings;
- ❖ *Walnut chutney, with Kashmiri origins*, a blend of walnuts, plain yogurt and cayenne (hot red pepper).

For quick, easy and tasty at-home versions, add chopped pistachios to prepared hummus or stir chopped, toasted pecans into fruit salsa and spoon over light cream cheese spread on a small plate. Serve with carrot sticks or whole-grain crackers.

In Distinctive, Creamy Sauces

Finely chop or slice nuts and blend them with other ingredients to give a creamy texture to sauces.

- ❖ *Italian pesto sauce* is a blend of basil, pine nuts, garlic and Parmesan cheese. Perfect served with pasta, pizza or crusty bread;
- ❖ *Malay or Indonesian satay sauce* is made with chopped or ground peanuts and onion, flavored with chile peppers, citrus juice, spices (sometimes with coconut milk, too) and served with grilled meat or chicken kebabs;
- ❖ *Greek skordalia* is a savory sauce of ground almonds, pine nuts or walnuts, potato, lemon, garlic and olive oil used to top meat or rice.

In Savory Main Dishes

Mix, toss or top hearty main dishes with nuts to “layer the flavors.”

- ❖ *Chinese stir-fries*: vegetables and small pieces of meat, chicken, fish or tofu are cooked quickly over high heat in a little oil and sprinkled with cashews or almonds;
- ❖ *Thai vegetable-noodle dishes (such as pad thai)* are tossed with finely-chopped peanuts or cashews;
- ❖ *Middle Eastern kibbeh* is a dish made with ground meat (beef or lamb) bulgur, tomato sauce, spices and pine nuts;
- ❖ *Mexican chiles en nogada* are poblano peppers filled with spicy ground meat and topped with a creamy sauce of walnuts and pomegranate seeds.

In your kitchen, add pine nuts and golden raisins to meatballs, stir-fry veggies with shrimp and cashews or use ground nuts in place of bread crumbs as a coating for fish fillets or skinless chicken breasts.

If you love the taste and versatility of nuts, global cuisines offer many enticing ways to enjoy them. Go for a taste adventure at home. Try these delicious, healthy living recipes that use nuts and bring the flavors of Asia or the Caribbean to your table.

On the Side

Mix nuts in side dishes. Whole, chopped or ground nuts add flavor and texture to:

- ❖ *Mediterranean dolmades*: grape leaves stuffed with ground lamb, rice, raisins, seasonings and pine nuts;
- ❖ *Biryani*: a savory rice dish enjoyed in India and Pakistan, made with meat, fish or vegetables and garnished with nuts, as well as raisins and edible flowers;
- ❖ *Fish and poultry stuffings*, such as walnut-raisin-nut stuffing for Bulgarian carp, or Turkish pilaf stuffing for chicken, with pine nuts, rice and currants.

At home, it’s easy to add the crunch and flavor of nuts to side dishes. Stir cubed cooked butternut squash, raisins and almonds into prepared couscous, top mashed sweet potatoes with toasted pecans or mix chopped peanuts into coleslaw.

Asian Noodles with Chicken and Cashews

Prep: 15 min.
Total: 30 min.

- 4 oz. whole wheat spaghetti, uncooked
- 1/2 cup PLANTERS Cashews, divided
- 4 tsp. (1/2 of 1.2-oz. envelope) GOOD SEASONS Asian Sesame Salad Dressing & Recipe Mix
- 1/4 tsp. grated lime peel
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- 1/2 tsp. minced or grated gingerroot
- 1/2 cup water
- 3/4 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked, thinly sliced
- 1 cup each: thinly sliced red peppers, mushrooms and green onions
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

COOK spaghetti as directed on package. Meanwhile, coarsely chop 2 Tbsp. of the cashews; set aside. Place remaining cashews, the salad dressing mix, lime peel, lime juice, ginger and water in blender; cover. Blend on high speed until well blended; set aside.

DRAIN pasta well; place in large bowl. Add chicken, peppers, mushrooms and onions; mix lightly.

ADD dressing mixture; toss to coat. Sprinkle with parsley and reserved cashews. Serve warm.

Makes 4 servings, about 1-3/4 cups each.

Nutrition Bonus: Cashews add crunch to this nutritious and flavorful Asian-inspired dish.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 330 calories, 11g total fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 50mg cholesterol, 480mg sodium, 34g carbohydrate, 6g dietary fiber, 5g sugars, 26g protein, 25%DV vitamin A, 90%DV vitamin C, 6%DV calcium, 20%DV iron.

Exchange: 2 Starch, 3 Meat (VL), 1-1/2 Fat.

Caribbean Nut-Crusted Flounder

Prep: 15 min.
Total: 27 min.

- 1/4 cup chopped PLANTERS Almonds
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. PLANTERS Peanut Oil
- Grated peel and juice from 1 medium lime, divided
- 4 flounder fillets (1 lb.)
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked as directed on package
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen broccoli florets, steamed

PREHEAT oven to 375°F. Combine almonds, cilantro, garlic, oil and lime peel; set aside.

PLACE fish on lightly greased baking sheet. Drizzle with lime juice. Top evenly with almond mixture; press lightly into fish to secure.

BAKE 10 to 12 min. or until fish flakes easily with fork. Serve with the rice and broccoli.

Makes 4 servings.

Substitute: Substitute your favorite mild white fish, such as sole, for the flounder.

Nutrition Bonus: Looking for a way to add more fish and nuts into your diet? Try this low-calorie low-fat meal.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 340 calories, 8g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 60mg cholesterol, 120mg sodium, 40g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 1g sugars, 29g protein, 15%DV vitamin A, 70%DV vitamin C, 8%DV calcium, 10%DV iron.

Exchange: 2-1/2 Starch, 3 Meat (L), 1 Fat.

Dietary Exchanges based on *Exchange Lists for Meal Planning* © 2003 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.