in a nutshell

THE HEALTH BENEFITS AND CULINARY USES OF NUT MEATS

Cashews
(Approximately 18 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Excellent source of copper and magnesium. Soft, pinkish-white kernels with a delicate, sweet flavor. Native to South America, but introduced by colonists to Africa and India. Commonly eaten as a snack, raw or roasted, but often used in Asian recipes and to make a rich, creamy nut butter or vegan cheese.

Brazil Nuts
(Approximately 6 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Largest nut commonly eaten. Grows wild on trees in Amazon rain forests. In addition to poly- and monounsaturated fats, contain more than 100% daily value for antioxidant selenium. Rich, creamy texture lends well to snacking, raw or roasted, and confections.

Hazelnuts
(Approximately 21 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Also known as filberts, they are rich in mono-unsaturated fats and an excellent source of vitamin E, copper and manganese. Available in-shell, whole, sliced and as a coating for fish and in sweets such as pralines and pecan pie.

Pecans
(Approximately 19 halves per 1 oz. serving)
Rich in antioxidants and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. Sweet, mellow flavor and nutty texture lend well to a variety of dishes, including salads, as a coating for fish and in sweets such as pralines and pecan pie.

Walnuts
(Approximately 14 halves per 1 oz. serving)
Integral part of Mediterranean diet, contributing to health benefits of this style of eating. Rich in antioxidants and excellent source of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), the plant-based form of omega-3. Grooves hold onto flavors well and are delicious when seasoned sweet or hot. Oil can be used in dressings and sautés.

Pistachios
(Approximately 49 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Contain antioxidants, including lutein and zeaxanthin. Eating in-shell helps slow consumption. Bright color makes for great addition to salads, grain dishes and as a coating for meats. Native to the Middle East, home of favorites like baklava, halvah and ma’amoul, a shortbread pastry.

Pine Nuts
(Approximately 167 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Soft nut found inside cone of several varieties of pine trees. Good source of vitamin E and phosphorus. Standard ingredient in Italian cuisine and most known for its use in pesto. Light, delicate flavor also lends well to pastas, salads, sautés, breads and other baked goods.

Almonds
(Approximately 23 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Excellent source of vitamin E and magnesium, also provides calcium and folate. Versatile ingredient, can be used whole, sliced, blanched to remove skins, and as flour, paste or butter. California provides 80 percent of world’s supply, but almonds are enjoyed in savory and sweet dishes globally.

Pistachios
(Approximately 49 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Excellent source of copper and magnesium, Soft consistency with delicate, sweet flavor. Native to South America, but introduced by colonists to Africa and India. Commonly eaten as a snack, raw or roasted, but often used in Asian recipes and to make a rich, creamy nut butter or vegan cheese.

Macadamias
(Approximately 10-12 nuts per 1 oz. serving)
Native to subtropical rain forests of Australia, this nut is high in fat, but 17 of the 22 grams are mono-unsaturated. Excellent source of manganese. Unique rich, buttery taste and smooth texture lends it eating as a snack raw or roasted. Often baked into cookies and coated with chocolate.

With mounting evidence showing their many health benefits, it’s OK to recommend nuts as part of a healthy diet. In fact, it’s more than OK.

Tree nuts are plant-based proteins that contain fiber and a combination of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants for each variety. They are also rich in plant sterols and fat, particularly the heart-healthy monounsaturated kinds.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a Qualified Health claim that states: Eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. These nuts include almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, some pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts—which contain less than 4 grams of saturated fat for a 50-gram (about 1.5 ounce) serving.

The combination of fiber, protein and fat in nuts provides satiety to meals and snacks, making them an excellent option for weight management. There is a caveat, however—portion size. While nuts are healthy, they are calorie-dense. Nuts range from 160 calories to 200 calories per ounce. To get their health benefits without breaking the calorie bank, it’s best to substitute them for other foods in the diet, particularly those high in saturated fat. This can be achieved with one to two ounces a day.

It’s easy to lump nuts into one category, but what makes each nut meat special is its unique package of nutrients, taste, texture, origin and culinary uses. Here’s a taste ... in a nutshell.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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