



PEARS

What is It?

- Pears originated from northern Asia and Europe. European pears were hard, small, and sour and not eaten raw until they were bred for sweetness over many years. Asian pears, or “Nashi” in Japanese, came from a different variety.
- Oregon and Washington grow about 88% of all pears grown in the United States, through about 900 family farms.
- Washington produces the most fresh pears of any state, mostly in the Wenatchee and Yakima valleys.
- The Orcas pear is named after Orcas Island, Washington, where it was first identified.
- Popular European pear varieties include bosc, bartlett, and anjou. Asian varieties include chojuro, hosui, and Korean giant.



Grow It

- Pears can be a great option for school gardens that have the space to grow them because they require less maintenance than annual crops and many other fruit trees. However, pear trees take several years before they bear fruit.
- Pears must be planted near at least one other variety so that the pollen from their flowers can mix, allowing fruit to develop. This process is called pollination. Consider purchasing multiple trees of different varieties. For full-size trees, plant about 20–25 feet of space in every direction from buildings or other trees. Semi-dwarf trees need about 12–15 feet, and dwarf varieties require 8–10 feet.
- Choose a spot with full sun and plant in early spring. Place the tree in the ground at the same depth it was growing in its container, then firmly pack the soil around the roots. Water thoroughly and apply fertilizer as directed within a one-foot circle around the trunk.

Harvesting tips:

- Do not allow European pears to ripen on the tree, as this will lead to a gritty texture and poor flavor. The small surface dots (lenticels) often shift from white to brown, and the skin becomes smoother and slightly waxy. To protect next year’s fruit buds, gently twist or clip the pears from the stem rather than pulling them off.
- Asian pears can be left on the tree until ripe. They are ready to harvest when they turn from green to yellowish-brown and the stem becomes dry and brittle.



All About Pears

Learn It and Make It

Objectives

- Identify pears as a fruit, and the recommended daily servings of fruit in a healthy diet.
- Know how to select, store, and use pears.
- Demonstrate the use of pears in a recipe.

Materials

- One or two different varieties of fresh pear to show
- One can of pears
- Measuring cup: 1 cup

What You Say	What You Do
<p>Today we're going to learn about a kind of fruit. I'm going to give you some clues, and I want you to try to think of what it is. After each clue, raise your hand if you think you know what it is.</p> <p>95% of these sold in the U.S. are grown on the West Coast in Washington, Oregon, and northern California.</p> <p>They used to be called "butter fruit" because many varieties have a soft, butter-like texture.</p> <p>When ripe, they are sweet and sometimes just a little sour, and VERY juicy.</p> <p>Many European varieties have a distinct shape that is somewhere between an oval and a bell, smaller at the top and very round at the base. Other varieties are round like a tennis ball.</p> <p>They are often yellowish-green, but can also be red, pink, or golden-brown.</p> <p>(Answer: Pear.)</p>	<p>Name each clue; allow a few guesses before moving on to the next clue.</p> <p>After someone guesses the answer, or you tell them, show them visuals of pears.</p>





All About Pears

Learn It

What You Say	What You Do
<p>The amount of fruit we need each day depends on our age, but ranges between 1-2 cups a day, with small children needing at least 1 cup and older children and adults needing 2 cups.</p> <p>One medium pear is equal to 1 cup of fruit.</p>	<p>Show a medium-sized pear. Show a 1 cup measuring cup.</p>
<p>Pears are a fruit that grows on trees. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, including green, yellow, pink, and red.</p> <p>European pears do not ripen fully while they are still on the tree. They are picked when they are still somewhat hard. Growers pick the fruit once it is nice and plump and the color turns from dark green to lighter yellow or red, depending on the variety.</p> <p>When you get European pears from the grocery store or from the tree, they may need to sit on the counter for a few days before they become soft and juicy, so it's important to be patient. You'll know they are ready when you press them with your thumb and can feel that they are just a little soft.</p> <p>Asian pears are crispy, kind of like an apple. They ripen fully on the tree and can be eaten right away. They should feel firm when you press on them, not soft like a European pear.</p>	<p>Demonstrate the "neck test" on a real pear or a food model pear.</p>
<p>You always want to wash pears before eating or cutting. To wash, rinse under running tap water right before eating.</p>	





All About Pears

Learn It

What You Say	What You Do
<p>Has anyone ever eaten a pear that was already sliced, and the slices turned a little bit brown? That happens when the inside of the fruit touches air.</p> <p>To prevent this, you can dip them in lemon, orange, or pineapple juice. The acid in these juices (which is what makes them taste sour), protects the fruit from turning brown.</p>	<p>If possible, have samples of cut pears with and without dipping in an acidic juice to show the difference in color.</p>
<p>There are several popular varieties of pears. Common European pears include bartlett, anjou and bosc. Asian pear varieties include chojuro, hosui, and Korean giant. Each one looks a little different and has a slightly different flavor and texture.</p> <p>There is even a variety of pear named after a place in Washington: the Orcas pear. It got its name because it was first discovered on Orcas Island, which is an island in the Puget Sound in Western Washington.</p> <p>Orcas pears tend to have a teardrop shape and are yellow with shades of pink. They have a soft, creamy texture and are very juicy. Orcas pears are also resistant to many of the common diseases that affect other pear varieties in Washington.</p>	<p>If possible, show one or two different varieties of pear.</p>
<p>Pears aren't only eaten fresh. Has anyone ever had pears from a can?</p> <p>Pears are a popular fruit for canning because they keep a good texture and flavor. And canned pears are good for you too—just like fresh pears!</p>	<p>Hold up a can of pears.</p> <p>Call on someone who has their had raised and prompt them to share about how canned pears taste.</p>





All About Pears

Learn It

What You Say	What You Do
<p>What are some different ways we can eat pears? (Possible answers: raw, in salads, baked, in sauce, or any way that you eat apples.)</p> <p>Pears are great eaten raw. They can be eaten whole or sliced. They make a good, quick snack cold from the refrigerator. The cold temperature enhances their flavor. And you can eat the peel too.</p>	<p>Have participants name some ways to eat pears.</p>
<p>Can you guess why we would want to eat pears? (Answer: Pears have lots of important nutrients in them, like vitamin C and fiber.)</p> <p>Vitamin C helps cuts and bruises to heal and helps keep our gums healthy. Fiber helps keep our heart and digestive system healthy.</p>	<p>Encourage participants to answer.</p>
<p>Pears aren't only eaten fresh. Has anyone ever had pears from a can?</p> <p>Pears are a popular fruit for canning because they keep a good texture and flavor. And canned pears are good for you too—just like fresh pears!</p>	<p>Hold up a can of pears.</p> <p>Call on someone who has their had raised and prompt them to share about how canned pears taste.</p>
<p>Are you ready to try out our pear recipe?</p>	



All About Pears

Make It

Be sure to follow local Food Safety rules and regulations. Learn more here: [Food Safety Rules and Regulations | Washington State Department of Health](#).

Equipment List:

- Knife
- Measuring cups
- Spoons
- Cutting Board
- Bowls

What You Say	What You Do
<p>Today we are going to make a Breakfast Pear Parfait.</p> <p>How many food groups do we have in this recipe? Let's look through the ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Oat circle cereal—Grains •Pear—Fruit •Low-fat yogurt—Dairy <p>We have three food groups in this recipe. Which two are missing? (Answer: vegetables and protein.)</p>	<p>Pass out the recipes.</p> <p>Call on people or prompt after naming each ingredient. Point to each food group you discuss.</p> <p>Allow participants to answer.</p>
<p>As we talked about earlier, we should be eating 1–2 cups of fruits per day, depending on our age. This fun and easy recipe can help us to reach that daily goal.</p>	<p>Hold up a 1 cup measuring cup.</p>
<p>We will be chopping the pears with a knife on a cutting board.</p> <p>What do we want to remember about knife and cutting board safety?</p> <p>What does the cooking term "chop" mean? (Answer: To cut solids into pieces with a sharp knife.)</p>	<p>Allow answers.</p> <p>Review and demonstrate knife safety skills, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knife is not a toy. It is a tool and should be treated with care and respect. • Always move slowly and deliberately when using a knife. Anticipate where the blade is going to land. • Curl fingers holding the item being cut under like a claw to protect your finger tips while cutting.



All About Pears

Make It

What You Say	What You Do
<p>Before we chop the pear, what needs to be done?</p> <p>(Answer: The pear needs to be washed under cool running water.)</p>	<p>Allow answers.</p>
<p>If we did not have fresh pears, what could be substituted for them in this recipe?</p> <p>(Answer: Canned pears.)</p> <p>Remind participants to wash the top of cans before opening.</p>	<p>Allow answers.</p>
<p>One medium-sized pear is equal to 1 cup of fruit, so each serving of this recipe is equal to 1/2 cup of fruit. How much canned fruit would we use in each serving?</p> <p>(Answer: 1/2 cup.)</p>	<p>Allow answers.</p>
<p>What is the first thing we need to do before we begin the preparation of this recipe?</p> <p>(Answer: Wash our hands.)</p>	<p>Prompt participants to wash their hands by wetting hands with warm water, putting soap in their hands, scrubbing for 20 seconds, then rinsing thoroughly.</p>

Activity adapted from South Dakota State University Extension [Pick It Try it! Like it! Curriculum](#).





Make It

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Equipment List:

- Knife
- Cutting Board
- Measuring cups
- Bowls
- Spoons

Recipe: Breakfast Pear Parfait Yield: 2 snack size servings	
Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups toasted oat cereal 1 pear, chopped 1 cup low-fat yogurt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put 1 cup toasted oat cereal into each of 2 small bowls. 2. Add half of the chopped pears on top of the cereal in each bowl. 3. Top each bowl with 1/2 cup of low-fat yogurt.

Explore interactive taste test resources to encourage participants to try what you made!
[Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)



Pears growing, credit: WSDA

Eat It

- Pears are rich in vitamin C, which helps with healing, keeps skin and gums healthy, and supports immune function. Pears are also high in fiber; higher than almost any other fruit! Fiber is important for maintaining a healthy heart and digestive system and regulating blood sugar.

Read It

- Too Many Pears!, by Jackie French
- Little Pear Tree, by Rachel Williams, illustrated by Jenny Bowers
- Mr. Putter & Tabby Pick the Pears, by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Arthur Howard



Pears growing, credit: WSDA

More About It

- Lesson for Preschool from South Dakota State University: [Pear - Preschool Lesson Plan](#)
- Lessons from Massachusetts Farm to School:
 - K–2nd Grade: [Fruit Dissection](#)
 - 3rd–5th Grade: [Still Life with Pears](#)