



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.
- Select disease-resistant root stock. 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 easy to break.



Make It

Recipe: Tuna Salad with Pears
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 tablespoons plain yogurt • 2 tablespoon lemon juice • 10 ounces tuna, canned in water or oil • 2 pears, chopped • 2 stalks of celery, finely diced • 2 carrots, grated • 4 tablespoons parsley, fresh or dried (optional) • 4 tablespoons nuts, chopped (optional) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To make the dressing, mix yogurt and lemon juice in a small bowl. For thin dressing, add a tablespoon of water or milk. 2. Drain tuna and mix it with the other dry ingredients in a bowl. 3. Pour dressing over tuna mixture and stir to combine. Serve.

Chef's Tip
You can substitute canned salmon for the tuna in this recipe.

This recipe was adapted from adapted from [EatFresh](#).



Pear growing, credit: WSDA



Make It

Recipe: Pear Quesadillas Yield: 4 servings	
Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup grated cheese (cheddar, jack, or pepper jack)• 1 cup pear slices, fresh or canned• 1/2 cup finely chopped bell pepper, any color• 2 tablespoons minced onion, any type• 4 medium whole-wheat tortillas	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place 1/4 of the cheese, pears, pepper and onion on one side of each tortilla. Fold each tortilla in half over the filling.2. Heat a skillet or griddle to medium (300 degrees F in an electric skillet). Place one or two folded tortillas on a dry skillet and heat until cheese melts and the tortilla browns slightly, about 2–4 minutes.3. With a large spatula, gently turn quesadillas over and cook the other side until a little brown, 2–4 minutes.4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each remaining quesadilla. Cut each quesadilla in half and serve.

Chef's Tip

- Put pear slices on a paper towel for a couple of minutes to help dry them out. This will help your quesadilla stick together.
- Add some chopped cilantro or use pepper jack cheese for a boost of flavor.

This recipe was adapted from adapted from [Oregon Food Hero](#).



Eat It

- Pears are one of the most easily digested fruits. They are an excellent source of dietary fiber, which is important for maintaining a healthy heart and digestive system and regulating blood sugar. A medium pear has six grams of fiber, which is 21% of the recommended daily allowance.
- Pears contain vitamin C, a proven antioxidant. Vitamin C helps with healing, keeps skin and gums healthy, and supports immune function.
- Pears also offer potassium, an electrolyte that helps build muscle and keeps the heart healthy.

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

Play It

Enjoy the coloring activity on the next page from Oregon Food Hero!

Find It

Washington pears are available at many grocery stores. Check the product label or shelf tag to see where they were grown. Pears are also commonly found at Washington state's many farmers markets, farm stands, and other local markets during market season, though their peak season is September through November.

When selecting European pears, avoid ones that are already soft anywhere but the neck. A ripe European pear should give slightly when gentle pressure is applied pressure at the neck, where the stem attaches to the fruit. If it is soft anywhere else, it is overripe and will be mushy. If you plan to eat a European pear in a few days, choose one with a neck that is hard. It will ripen on a countertop at room temperature.

Asian pears should be firm to touch and crispy when eaten. They ripen fully on the tree and can be eaten right away. They can be stored for about a week at room temperature or up to three months in the refrigerator.

Search for local farms and markets that sell Washington-grown pears here: [Washington Food & Farm Finder - Eat Local First](#)

Find a farmers market near you here: [Farmers Market in Washington](#). Many farmers markets and vendors accept WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, WIC Fruit and Vegetable Benefit, and SNAP Market Match.



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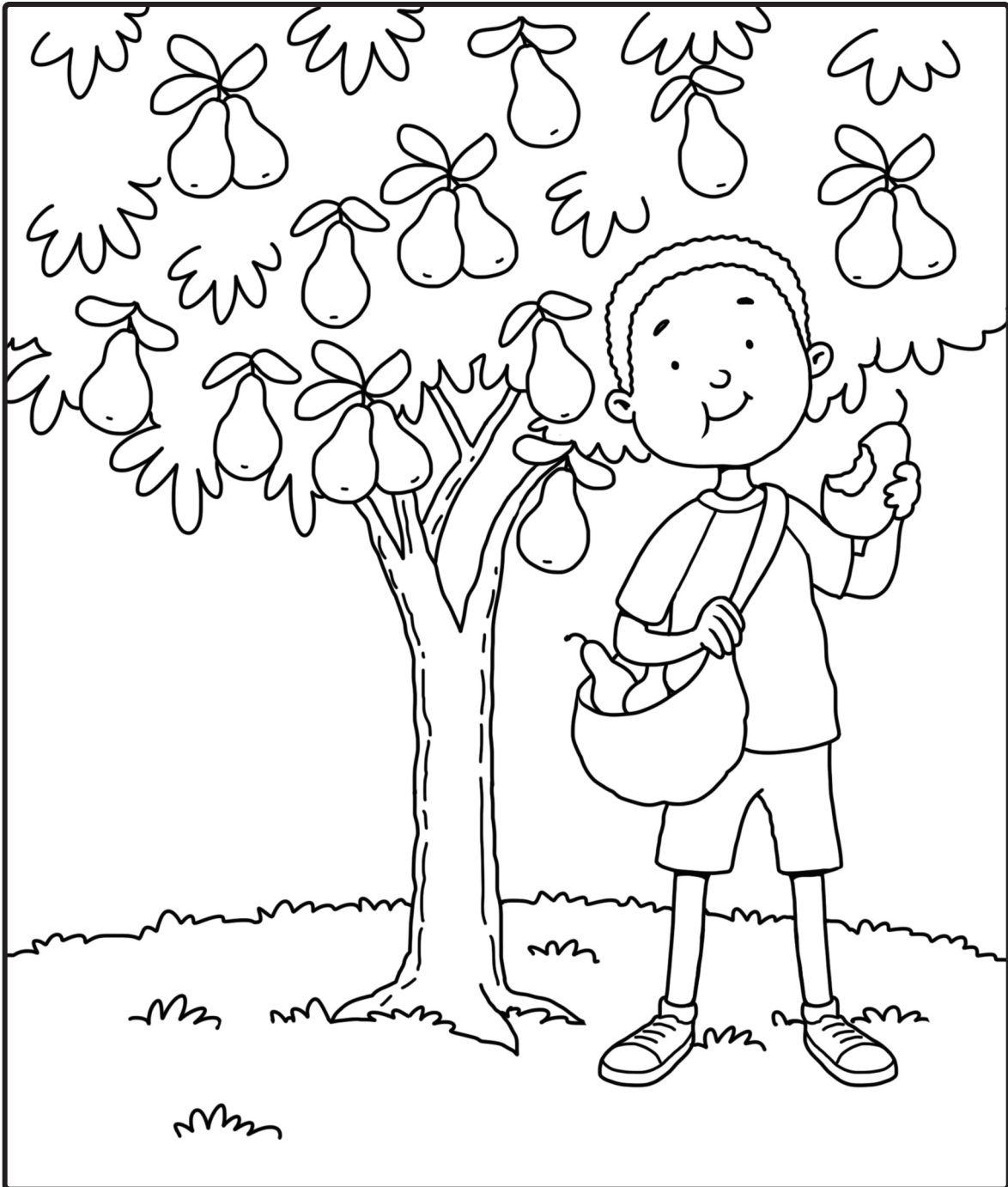
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SNAP-Ed

Name _____

Pears



I like pears because



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