



# STONE FRUIT

## What is It?

- Stone fruits are fruits that have a pit or “stone” in their center.
- Common types of stone fruit include cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums. Blackberries and raspberries also classify as stone fruit.
- Washington is the nation’s largest producer of sweet cherries—a broad classification that includes 20-30 different cherry varieties.
- Apricots originated in China, where they were first cultivated about 4,000 years ago.
- The fuzzy skin on peaches helps protect them from pests and retains moisture.
- Nectarines are just peaches without the fuzz. They’re the same species but in smooth-skinned form.
- Plums are one of the first fruits domesticated by humans, going back to the Neolithic period.
- Pluots and apriums are both hybrid fruit created by crossing plums and apricots. Pluots are mostly plum (60% plum and 40% apricot), while apriums are mostly apricot (75% apricot and 25% plum).

## Grow It

- Stone fruit can be a great option for school gardens with plenty of space because they are relatively low maintenance compared to annual crops and many other fruit trees; however, they take several years before they yield much or any fruit.
- Some varieties of stone fruits are self-fertile, while others must be planted near at least one other plant of the same species so that the pollen from their flowers can mix, allowing fruit to develop. This process is called pollination.
- Space planting holes according to individual variety instructions, typically 15 to 25 feet apart. Dig holes that are wide enough for the entire root ball to fit comfortably without bending or bunching the roots and deep enough that roots will fit entirely underground and the trunk base will sit right at soil level.
- Fill soil around roots slowly, packing lightly as you go. Be sure the tree sits level with surrounding ground once planted. Soil mounded around the trunk base could cause rot or disease. After planting, water thoroughly to help soil settle around roots. Wait to apply any fertilizer for several days or weeks until soil has fully settled and been well watered



Rainier cherries, credit: WSDA



**Make It**

**Recipe: Peachy Peanut Butter Pita Pockets**  
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 pita pockets</li><li>• 1/4 cup peanut butter or sun butter</li><li>• 1/2 apple</li><li>• 1 banana</li><li>• 1/2 peach</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cut pitas in half to make a pocket for each serving and warm in the microwave for about 10 seconds to make them softer.</li><li>2. Carefully open each pocket and spread a thin layer of peanut or sun butter on the inside.</li><li>3. Fill with a combination of apple, banana, and peach slices. Serve.</li></ol>

**Chef's Tip**

- Try these pitas with other stone fruits such as nectarines, apricots, cherries, or plums.

Recipe adapted from [eatFresh](#).



Peach orchard in Grant County, credit: WSDA



## Make It

Recipe: Very Berry Muesli  
Yield: 5 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 cup low-fat fruit yogurt</li><li>• 1 cup old fashioned rolled oats</li><li>• 1/2 cup nonfat or 1% milk</li><li>• 1/2 cup dried apricots</li><li>• 1/2 cup chopped apple (about 1/3 of a medium apple)</li><li>• 1/2 cup frozen cherries, peaches, or nectarines</li><li>• 1/4 cup chopped, toasted walnuts, sunflower seeds, or pepitas</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In medium bowl, mix oats, yogurt and milk.</li><li>2. Cover and refrigerate for 6 to 12 hours.</li><li>3. Add dried and fresh fruit and mix gently.</li><li>4. Serve scoops of muesli in small dishes. Sprinkle each serving with nuts or seeds.</li></ol>

Recipe adapted from [Oregon Food Hero](#).



Cherries on branch,  
credit: WSDA



Peaches in Grant County, credit: WSDA

## Eat It

Stone fruits are packed with vitamins A and C and a variety of antioxidants. These nutrients work together to support the body's digestive and immune systems. The fiber in stone fruits helps regulate blood sugar while supporting heart and digestive system health. Stone fruits are also generally rich in potassium, an electrolyte that helps build muscles and maintain a healthy heart.

Stone fruit nutrition also varies depending on whether they're eaten fresh, canned, or dried. For example, canned peaches may have less fiber than fresh peaches because their skins have been removed. Dried apricots offer more fiber than fresh apricots per gram, because some nutrients become concentrated when they are dried. If choosing canned or dried stone fruit, choose options with no-sugar added.

## Read It

- The Peach Pit Parade, by Shana Keller
- Pie in the Sky, by Lois Ehlert
- Baba's Peach Tree, by Marie Tang
- How to Make a Cherry Pie and See the USA, by Marjorie Priceman

## Find It

Washington stone fruits are available at many grocery stores. Check the product label or shelf tag to see where they were grown. They are also commonly found fresh at Washington state's many farmers markets, farm stands, and other local markets from June through September, though seasonality varies for each fruit.

Search for local farms and markets that sell Washington-grown stone fruits here: [Washington Farms](#) | [Local Farm Finder](#) | [Washington Food](#)

## Play It

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



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# ..... Peaches .....



I like peaches because



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