



POMEGRANATE TALKING POINTS

2. A Seed of Pomegranate History

- **The pomegranate is native to region between Northern India and Iran.** The fruit has been grown from India all the way through the Mediterranean basin since ancient times.
- Pomegranates traveled on the Silk Road to China around 125 BC.
- Approximately AD 1521 Hernando Cortez, a Spanish conquistador, conquered the Aztecs in Mexico and missionaries planted the Pomegranate trees there. Eventually the trees were planted in missions in California
- Pomegranates grow wild in the Middle East and were one of the first five domesticated crops along with olives, grapes, figs, and dates.
- Even today the largest producer of pomegranates is the Mediterranean basin.
- Due to the vibrant color of the pomegranate juice it has been used as a juice, in dyes and inks, and as a tannin for leather.
- When people would take long journeys in ancient times they would often take pomegranates with them because they have a relatively long shelf life and they travel well. The fruit would provide a source of water and a condensed form of nutrients.
- Ancient Egyptian scribes used ink from pomegranates to write some of the gospels in the Bible.
- King Tut was buried with a vase that depicted pomegranates on it.
- The word pomegranate comes from the Middle French word Pome Garnet which means seeded apple.

3. How Do Pomegranates Grow?

- Pomegranates grow on a small tree, about 12-18 feet, that has slender small leaves.
- The flowers are large in size and are usually red. They form a funnel shape and grow in clusters of 1-5.
- **The flowers are pollinated by insects and hummingbirds.**
- The fruit grows into irregularly rounded pome that has a bright red leathery rind and a distinct calyx. The rind encloses a spongy white tissue called the endocarp. The endocarp encloses the arils, or juice sacs.
- The fruit matures in about 6-7 months.
- Pomegranates grow best in dry climates that have mild winters.

4. What Season do we pick Pomegranates?

- In the Northern Hemisphere the fruit is ready to be harvested in the months from September to February.
- The Southern Hemisphere has its peak season from March to May.

5. Reasons to Eat Pomegranates

- One medium pomegranate contains 105 calories and several hundred edible seeds.
- The seeds of the pomegranate are a good source of **potassium and Vitamin C.**
- The fruit also contains polyphenol a compound that is shown to promote heart health.

- Also the red fruit helps clean clogged arteries and improve blood flow to the heart.
- The seeds are a good source of vitamin C and potassium.
- The dark color of the pomegranate juice has large amounts of antioxidants in it. Antioxidants are credited in helping to prevent cancer and heart disease. The antioxidants pick up harmful oxidizers in the body that can harm your DNA. They are like soldiers for the cells in your body.

6. How do you pick a good Pomegranate?

- To pick out a ripe pomegranate at the store lightly tap the outside and it should make a metallic sound.
- The outside skin should be clinging tightly to the inside seeds.
- The pomegranate should be heavy for its size.
- The fruit should be brightly colored and shiny.
- If you squeeze the crown at the top of the pomegranate it should not be firm but it also should not be too soft.
- The fruit will not ripen after it has been picked from the tree.
- Pomegranates can be stored in a cool dry place for up to a month.
- If you take out the arils (juice sacs) and store them in an air tight container they can be stored in the freezer for up to one year.
- The juice sacs are called arils, and the white spongy part is called endocarp.

Fun Fact:

- Each pomegranate contains about 600 seeds, or arils.