

# COMMERCIAL & FOODSERVICE TOOLKIT





# CHEFS CULINARY PROFESSIONALS TECHNOLOGISTS RETAILERS & FOOD PROCESSORS

recognize pecans' great taste, versatility and numerous health benefits. Pecans, loved for centuries for their sweet crunch and undeniable flavor, are an ideal ingredient for many foods.



Here in this Commercial and Foodservice Toolkit you'll discover interesting new ways to incorporate pecans into your operation for menu development. You'll learn creative ideas and interesting tips on handling, a pecan sizing chart, the history of pecans, and so much more.

Using pecans as an ingredient can create a unique taste, texture and flavor experience – but pecans also play an important nutritional role, and studies show that eating pecans may help reduce the risk of some diseases. Plus, demand for pecans is increasing year-round.

Pecans can be used effectively in a variety of processed food applications. To learn more about how to improve everything from appetizers and salads to entrées and desserts, take a look at the following pages in our guide to using pecans.

The National Pecan Shellers Association is proud to share this valuable information about pecans with the professionals in the commercial and foodservice industry.

The National Pecan Shellers Association has a long history of supporting the pecan industry, dating back to 1943. The Association represents members of the pecan shelling and processing industry whose purpose is to generate awareness and sales of pecans. For more information on what to look for when buying pecans and how to keep them fresh, check out the website at [ILovePecans.org](http://ILovePecans.org) or email us at [npsa@kellencompany.com](mailto:npsa@kellencompany.com).

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## PECAN PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES



### PECANS ARE ALL OVER THE MAP

U.S. pecans are grown in 15 states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas.

Most shelling plants are located in the southeastern and southwestern United States where the majority of pecans are grown.



Significant quantities of pecans are now produced in Mexico's states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo Leon and Sonora. Modest quantities are produced across the globe in areas such as Australia, Israel, Peru and South Africa.

Since 1925, pecan production has steadily increased in the United States, rising from 2.2 million pounds in 1920 to between 250 and 300 million pounds today. Before 1920, pecans were "hand-shelled" by consumers — in other words, they removed the shell themselves.

With the development of commercial shelling equipment, the pecan industry began to grow. In the early 1920's, pecan processing was developed, along with equipment used for sizing, separation of faulty meats and shells, cracking, grading of meats, drying and packaging. Improvements in the area of storage life, such as temperature and humidity control, also contributed to the increasing popularity of pecans.

### THE SHELLING PROCESS

Since 1948 more than 80% of the pecans sold have been "shelled" (the shell has been removed). Some shelling plants operate year-round. Others operate on a seasonal basis, most commonly during the fall months.

The shelling process reduces a pecan's weight by 50 to 65 percent and its volume approximately by half. To keep the pecan meat from shattering, the nuts are moistened or "conditioned" before cracking.

The pecans are cracked by a machine that applies force to both ends of each nut. The cracked pecans are placed on a conveyor, where they are moved to the sheller machines. Meats and shells are separated by a series of shaker screens. Shelled pecans are then separated into grades — the meats pass over rapidly vibrating machines with holes of many different sizes (for example, halves come in eight sizes, based on the number per pound).

Large pecan plants can have as many as 14 cracking machines with a capacity of 150,000 pounds a day and 30 million pounds or more each season. Plants usually have a cold storage facility, some capable of holding several million pounds of shelled and unshelled nuts.

In-shell pecans are refrigerated as soon as possible after harvest, which is necessary to maintain freshness and avoid insect infestation (especially during the summer months).

Freezing pecans from season to season is also an excellent method for storage— even at temperatures as low as -170 degrees (solid carbon dioxide), there is no seepage of oil or decrease in pecan quality.

Shelled pecans are packed in vacuum-packed cans, jars, glass, cellophane bags or poly-lined boxes to protect against factors such as humidity, oxidation, insects and light. The pecans are then stored or shipped to retail, foodservice or commercial markets.





# NUTRITIOUS, VERSATILE, FLAVORFUL

Shelled pecans can be purchased in a variety of sizes, mainly pieces and halves. The pecans vary in size, length, and color depending on the variety. There are over 1,000 varieties of pecans. The chart below shows the standard sizes for each category, from halves and pieces, all the way down to meal.



## MAMMOTH HALVES

200-250 count per pound  
(440-550 per kg)



## LARGE HALVES

451-550 count per pound  
(991-1200 per kg)



## EXTRA LARGE PIECES

through 9/16" over 8/16"  
(through 14.3 mm over 12.7 mm)



## SMALL PIECES

through 4/16" over 3/16"  
(through 6.4 mm over 4.8 mm)



## JUNIOR MAMMOTH HALVES

251-300 count per pound  
(551-660 per kg)



## MEDIUM HALVES

551-650 count per pound  
(1201-1430 per kg)



## LARGE PIECES

through 8/16" over 6/16"  
(through 12.7 mm over 9.5 mm)



## EXTRA SMALL PIECES

through 3/16" over 2/16"  
(through 4.8 mm over 3.2 mm)



## JUMBO HALVES

301-350 count per pound  
(661-770 per kg)



## SMALL HALVES (TOPPERS)

651-800 count per pound  
(1431-1760 per kg)



## LARGE/MEDIUM PIECES

through 6/16" over 5/16"  
(through 9.5 mm over 7.9 mm)



## GRANULES

through 2/16" over 1/16"  
(through 3.2 mm over 1.6 mm)



## EXTRA LARGE HALVES

351-450 count per pound  
(771-990 per kg)



## MAMMOTH PIECES

over 9/19" screen  
(over 14.3 mm)



## MEDIUM PIECES

through 5/16" over 4/16"  
(through 7.9 mm over 6.4 mm)



## MEAL

through 1/16"  
(through 1.6 mm)





# THE PECAN HARVEST



Click to watch a live Pecan Harvest at Sunnyland Farms, a multi-generation family-owned pecan sheller and grower, situated in Albany, Georgia, in the heart of Pecan Country.

Here you'll experience a rare behind-the-scenes look at how pecans are harvested and processed – from the shaking of the trees, to the cleaning, cracking and roasting of the nuts.

When you buy your pecans from local shellers and growers you get great prices and you'll be supporting your area's economy.

To find a pecan sheller see the list at the end of the Toolkit or visit the website at [ILovePecans.org](http://ILovePecans.org) for a complete list.

## TIPS FOR STORING AND BUYING

### Want to know the secret to keeping your pecans fresh?

It's simple. Store pecans in airtight containers and keep them in the refrigerator or freezer. When cooking or baking with pecans use them straight from the freezer, no thawing necessary. If using as a condiment or topping on an appetizer, entree or cheese platter, bring to room temperature.

### APPEARANCE

When buying pecans, look for plump pecans that are uniform in color and size.

### KEEP COOL

Shelled pecans can be kept in the refrigerator for about nine months and for up to two years in the freezer.

### SHELF LIFE

Pecans can be thawed and refrozen repeatedly during the two-year freezing period without loss of flavor or texture.

Once thawed, shelled pecans will stay good for an additional two months.

### AIRTIGHT

Airtight containers, such as jars with lids, are best for storing pecans in the refrigerator.

Sealed plastic bags are also best for storing pecans in the freezer.





# PECANS ARE HEART-HEALTHY



**heartcheckmark.org**

Heart-Check certification does not  
apply to information found within

Since 2012, select pecans have been designated as heart-healthy when enjoyed as part of a healthy eating pattern by the American Heart Association®'s Heart-Check Certification Program.

Unroasted and unsalted pecan halves and pieces carry the Heart-Check mark to inform consumers that they meet the program's nutritional guidelines including criteria for saturated fat and sodium.

The American Heart Association®'s Heart-Check Food Certification Program helps grocery shoppers quickly and easily identify heart-healthy foods that can be incorporated into a sensible eating pattern. In order to be certified, nuts must meet certain nutritional requirements for saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium and beneficial nutrients. Today, the red and white heart-healthy symbol has become the one of the most trusted and well-known nutrition icons representing heart-healthy eating.

## Science Says...

For nearly two decades, NPSA-funded research has confirmed that pecans can be a healthy addition to your diet. Below are summaries of landmark research studies confirming the health benefits associated with eating a diet rich in pecans. Summaries of these breakthrough studies are [posted here](#).

### 1. Helps with Weight Management and Obesity

A 2018 study from Tufts University shows that a pecan-rich diet improves cardiometabolic risk factors in overweight and obese adults. A pecan-rich diet may have a general benefit in modifying metabolic risk factors for many U.S. adults.

### 2. Lowers Cholesterol

Research conducted by the University of Georgia has also confirmed that pecans contain plant sterols, which are known for their cholesterol-lowering ability. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has acknowledged this and related research and approved the following qualified health claim: "Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as pecans, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease."

### 3. Contains Natural Antioxidants

Naturally-occurring antioxidants in pecans may help contribute to heart health and disease prevention, according to a study at Loma Linda University. The results were published in the January 2011 issue of *The Journal of Nutrition*. In addition, other research shows pecans rank highest among all nuts and are among the top category of foods to contain the highest antioxidant capacity, meaning pecans may decrease the risk of cancer, coronary heart disease and neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's.







## 75TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



WWW.ILOVEPECANS.ORG

**Unique recipes featuring pecans create robust menu options. Download the free cookbook with 75 pecan-inspired recipes. These popular recipes can be customized for your commercial applications.**

[www.ilovepecans.org/recipes](http://www.ilovepecans.org/recipes)

## Meatless Pecan and Mushroom Tacos

Serving Size: Makes about 6 flour tortillas or 10 taco shells

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons pecan or olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups chopped mushrooms
- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ to ¾ cup water

### To build your Taco

- Flour tortillas or taco shells
- Shredded Lettuce
- Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Chopped Tomatoes
- Chopped Onion
- Pickled Jalapeño
- Taco Sauce

### Instructions

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Sauté onions until softened, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and sauté until onions have caramelized and mushrooms have browned, about 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the pecans and the spices.

Sauté for about 2 minutes to toast. Stir in ½ to ¾ cup of water, reduce the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes until flavors have developed and water has reduced.

Serve with tortillas and assorted toppings.







## Mini Pecan Pies

Serving Size: 12 mini pies

### For the Pie Crust:

#### Ingredients

- 1 stick unsalted butter (1/4 pound)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/4 cup sifted AP flour
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup heavy cream

### For the Pecan Filling:

#### Ingredients

- 2 sticks unsalted butter (1/2 pound)
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 pound pecan pieces



### Preparations

Preheat oven to 350°F. 1. With an electric mixer, cream together 1 stick of butter and 1/4 cup sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until well combined. Whisk together the flour and salt and then add to butter mixture in 3 additions. Blend well until a dough forms. 2. Butter or spray 12 mini fluted molds. Divide dough into 12 equal portions and pat into mini molds. Prick the dough with a fork to prevent bubbling or rising. Partially

bake molds for 15 minutes. 3. In a saucepan, combine 2 sticks of butter, 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. brown sugar, 1/4 cup sugar and 1/4 cup honey. Bring to a boil and cook for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and carefully stir in the pecans and the heavy cream. 4. Pour the filling into the pie crust molds. Return to the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until bubbly and the top is semi-firm. Let cool before serving. 5. Serve Mini Pecan Pies with whipped cream if desired.



## Pecan Sliders

Serving Size: 4 - 6 Sliders

### Ingredients

- 1 cup pecan pieces
- 1/2 cup mushroom slices
- 1/4 cup diced onion
- 1 tsp. miso paste
- 1 tsp. tomato paste
- 4 tbsp. panko
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pecan oil as needed

### Preparation

Sauté onions, mushrooms and Pecans in a hot pan until onions are translucent. Add in tomato paste and miso and cook for 5 minutes. Cool mixture and add panko and egg. Form into patties. Brown patties in Pecan Oil for 5 minutes and then turn and brown on other side. Place on bun with condiments of your choice.



# PECAN CHEFS SUMMIT



## CHEFS LEARN TO INCORPORATE PECANS FOR COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

The Pecan Chef Summit Series, established by the National Pecan Shellers Association in 2015, has become the industry's leading chef immersion program into the world of pecans. With funding from a grant from the American Pecan Council in 2018, the Pecan Chefs Summit Series is growing into the premier pecan educational event among the foodservice industry.

This exclusive culinary educational experience showcases the many flavors, food pairings and uses of innovative pecan products such as pieces, meal, flour and oil.

Chefs interact with highly talented culinary professionals in a live cooking demo while participating in a hands-on cooking experience. Chefs learn how to incorporate recipes with pecans as ingredients into salads, soups, appetizers, entrees, sides and desserts.

An in-depth nutritional presentation highlights the many health benefits and applications. It's also a chance to collaborate with like-minded chefs and culinary leaders.

With the "Farm-to-Table" movement, this event allows attendees to tour a pecan orchard and pecan shelling facility to understand how pecans are grown and what it takes to bring them to market.

Attendees meet pecan industry professionals, from family-owned farms to million square-foot shelling facilities, on a guided tour from harvesting the pecans, to the cleaning and storing process, to distribution and beyond.

The Pecan Chefs Summits have been hosted in state-of-the-art culinary facilities such as The Culinary Institute of America – San Antonio Campus, considered one of the world's premier culinary colleges



dedicated to developing leaders in foodservice and hospitality and the Time Inc. Food Studios, one of the country's premier creative culinary publishing hubs, producing thousands of world-class recipes, images, and related content annually for Time Inc.'s print, cookbook, digital and social platforms.

Through participation in the Pecan Chefs Summit Series, top commercial and research & development chefs from nationally renowned brands (representing major food brands, foodservice companies, major chain restaurants, universities, hospitals, and more) have gained first-hand experience on how to incorporate pecans and pecan products for recipe development in commercial applications.





# PECAN HISTORY



## A TRUE AMERICAN NUT

Pecans are the only major tree nut native to North America. Their history dates back to the 16th century. The name “pecan” is a Native American word of Algonquin origin that was used to describe “all nuts requiring a stone to crack.”

Originating in central and eastern North America and the river valleys of Mexico, pecans were widely used by pre-colonial residents. Pecans were favored because they were accessible to waterways, easier to shell than other North American nut species and had excellent taste.

Because wild pecans were readily available, many Native American tribes in the U.S. and Mexico used the wild pecan as a major food source during autumn. It is speculated that pecans were used to produce a fermented intoxicating drink called “Powcohicora” (where the word “hickory” comes from). Native Americans are believed to be the first to cultivate the pecan tree in the 1500’s.

## LOVED BY PRESIDENTS

The first known cultivated pecan tree planting took place in northern Mexico by Spanish colonists and Franciscans sometime in late 1600’s or early 1700’s. These plantings occurred about 60 years before the first recorded planting by U.S. colonists.

In the U.S., the first pecan planting took place in Long Island, NY in 1772. By the late 1700’s, pecans from the northern range reached the English portion of the Atlantic

Seaboard and were planted in the gardens of easterners such as George Washington (1775) and Thomas Jefferson (1779). Settlers were also planting pecans in community gardens along the Gulf Coast at this time.

Realizing their economic potential the French and Spanish colonists began exporting pecans to the West Indies and Spain. By the turn of the century American colonists followed suit and the pecan industry was born.



Mount Rushmore National Memorial





# NUTTY FUN FACTS

It takes a magnificent tree to produce a great-tasting nut. Pecan trees usually range in height from 70 to 100 feet, but some trees grow as tall as 150 feet or higher. Native pecan trees – those over 150 years old – have trunks more than three feet in diameter.

**Roast them  
to add flavor!**

Texas adopted the pecan tree as its state tree in 1919. In fact, Texas Governor James Hogg liked pecan trees so much that he asked if a pecan tree could be planted at his gravesite when he died.

Save money with pieces (especially if you are using a recipe that calls for pieces).

There are over 1,000 varieties of pecans. Many are named for Native American tribes, including Cheyenne, Mohawk, Sioux, Choctaw and Shawnee.

Some of the larger pecan shellers process 150,000 pounds of pecans each day. That's enough to make 300,000 pecan pies!

Store properly: refrigerate or freeze to make them last longer.

**AMERICAN MADE**  
Pecans are grown in 15 States.





# WHERE TO BUY PECANS

## **ATWELL PECAN CO., INC.**

Wrens, GA  
Phone: 706-547-2554  
Atwellpecan@bellsouth.net  
[www.atwellpecan.com](http://www.atwellpecan.com)

## **DOLLINS ELLIS PECANS**

Comanche, TX  
Phone: 325-356-5291  
odie.dollins@durhams.com  
[durhampecan.com](http://durhampecan.com)

## **GOLDEN KERNEL PECAN CO., INC.**

Cameron, SC  
Phone: 800-845-2448  
info@goldenkernel.com  
[goldenkernel.com](http://goldenkernel.com)

## **GOLDEN PEANUT AND TREE NUTS**

El Paso, Texas  
Phone: 770-752-8160  
Adam.Harrell@goldenpeanut.com;  
Chris.Harrell@goldenpeanut.com  
[goldenpeanut.com](http://goldenpeanut.com)

## **GREEN VALLEY PECAN CO.**

Sahuarita, AZ  
Phone: 520-791-2852  
sales@greenvalleypecan.com  
[greenvalleypecan.com](http://greenvalleypecan.com)

## **HNH NUT COMPANY**

Visalia, CA  
Phone: 559-798-1517  
contact@hnhnuts.com  
[www.hnhnuts.com](http://www.hnhnuts.com)

## **HUMPHREY PECAN COMPANY**

Torreón, Coahuila Mexico  
Phone: 52-871-731-6004  
ghumphrey@humphreypecan.com.mx  
[humphreypecan.com.mx](http://humphreypecan.com.mx)

## **J. W. RENFROE PECAN COMPANY**

Pensacola, FL  
Phone: 800-874-1929  
info@renfroepcan.com  
[renfroepcan.com](http://renfroepcan.com)

## **JOHN B. SANFILIPPO & SON, INC.**

Elgin, IL  
Phone: 847-289-1800  
info@jbssinc.com  
[jbssinc.com](http://jbssinc.com)

## **LEYER**

Monterrey, Mexico  
Phone: 52 811 0261 982  
[gsantacruz@vomms.com](mailto:gsantacruz@vomms.com)

## **LOUISVILLE PECAN CO., INC.**

Louisville, AL  
Phone: 334-266-5388  
[louisvillepecan.com](http://louisvillepecan.com)

## **MASCOT PECAN SHELLING CO., INC.**

Glennville, GA  
Phone: 912-654-2195  
pecans@mascotpecan.com  
[mascotpecan.com](http://mascotpecan.com)

## **MILLER PECAN COMPANY, LLC**

Afton, OK  
Phone: 918-257-6887  
info@millerpecancompany.com  
[millerpecancompany.com](http://millerpecancompany.com)

## **MISSOURI NORTH PECAN GROWERS**

Nevada, MO  
Phone: 417-667-3501  
marketing@mopecans.com  
[www.mopecans.com](http://www.mopecans.com)

## **DIAMOND FOODS**

Stockton, CA  
Phone: 209-467-6000  
szaffarano@nationalpecan.com  
[Diamonds.com](http://Diamonds.com)

## **NAVARRO PECAN COMPANY**

Corsicana, TX  
Phone: 903-872-5641  
vhoward@navarropecan.com  
[navarropecan.com](http://navarropecan.com)

## **ORANGEBURG PECAN CO., INC.**

Orangeburg, SC  
Phone: 800-845-6970  
uspecans@yahoo.com  
[uspecans.com](http://uspecans.com)

## **PACIFIC GOLD AGRICULTURE**

Colusa, CA  
Phone: 530-240-6360  
info@pacgoldag.com  
[www.pacgoldag.com](http://www.pacgoldag.com)

## **PECAN GROVE FARMS**

Cedar Creek, TX  
Phone: 844-841-3655  
info@pecangrovefarms.com  
[pecangrovefarms.com](http://pecangrovefarms.com)

## **PECANS.COM**

Goldthwaite, TX  
Phone: 800-527-1825  
sales@pecans.com  
[pecans.com](http://pecans.com)

## **PRIESTER PECAN COMPANY**

Fort Deposit, AL  
Phone: 334-227-4301  
customerservice@priester.com  
[priesters.com](http://priesters.com)

## **RANCHO PECANA**

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico  
Phone: +53 656 633 2207  
Iromero@ranchopecana.com  
[www.ranchopecana.com](http://www.ranchopecana.com)

## **SAN SABA PECAN, LP**

San Saba, TX  
Phone: 325-372-5727  
sales@sansabapecan.com  
[sansabapecan.com](http://sansabapecan.com)

## **SOUTH GEORGIA PECAN COMPANY**

Valdosta, GA  
Phone: 800-627-6630  
kbarker@georgiapecan.com  
[georgiapecan.com](http://georgiapecan.com)

## **STAHMANN FARMS**

Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia  
Phone: +61 746 999 400  
[www.stahmann.com.au](http://www.stahmann.com.au)

## **STONE MOUNTAIN PECAN COMPANY, INC.**

Monroe, GA  
Phone: 770-207-6486  
[stonemountainpecan.com](http://stonemountainpecan.com)

## **SUN VALLEY PECAN COMPANY**

Fabens, TX  
Phone: 915-764-0710  
Michael@sunvalleypecan.com  
[sunvalleypecan.com/sunvalleypecan](http://sunvalleypecan.com/sunvalleypecan)

## **SUNNYLAND FARMS, INC.**

Albany, GA  
Phone: 229-436-5654  
awillson@sunnylandfarms.net  
[sunnylandfarms.com](http://sunnylandfarms.com)

## **SWIFT RIVER PECANS**

Martindale, Texas  
Phone: 512-212-0778  
troy\_swift@yahoo.com  
[swiftriverpecans.com](http://swiftriverpecans.com)

## **WHALEY PECAN COMPANY, INC.**

Troy, AL  
Phone: 334-566-3504  
Phone: 800-824-6827  
whaleypecan@bellsouth.net  
[whaleypecan.com](http://whaleypecan.com)

## **YORK PECAN COMPANY**

Foreman, AR  
Phone: 870-542-6196  
dan@yorkpecans.com  
[Yorkpecans.com](http://Yorkpecans.com)