

Try Me!

# Pomegranate

MEATLESS MONDAY



## Two Ways to Get the Seeds Out of Your Pomegranate:

- 1) Cut in sections. Put sections in a bowl of water and work the seeds out. The membrane will float to the top and the seeds will sink to the bottom. Drain and dry seeds on a paper towel.
- 2) Cut in half. Gently stretch the sides a little. Hold the pomegranate face down over a bowl and smack it with a wooden spoon. Seeds will fall into your bowl.

## Quick Facts:

- ▶ Earliest records show that pomegranates were first cultivated in Iran and the surrounding areas.
- ▶ Pomegranates are also grown in southern Europe, parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and California.
- ▶ Pomegranates were mentioned in many ancient texts.
- ▶ Pomegranate plants are also grown as ornamental bushes or trees because of the beautiful color of the fruit and long flowering period.
- ▶ Ancient Egyptians regarded the pomegranate as a symbol of prosperity and ambition.
- ▶ Pomegranate seeds are called “arils”. This is the part that is eaten once you separate it from the peel and internal white membranes.
- ▶ This powerful fruit is used in cooking, baking, juices, smoothies, and alcoholic beverages.

## Benefits

- ▶ A glass of pomegranate juice has more antioxidants than red wine, green tea, blueberries, or cranberries.
- ▶ Pomegranates have been known to lower cholesterol, and blood pressure.
- ▶ Studies show that eating pomegranates may help protect against heart attack and stroke.
- ▶ This fruit is rich in vitamin C, vitamin K, and fiber.

## How to Select

- ▶ Look for brightly colored fruit with a hard, red skin that is shiny and not withered. Try squeezing the brown crown at the top. It should not be firm or too soft.
- ▶ Pomegranates have a long storage life. Keep in temperatures between 32° - 41°. Fruit can be stored for several months. The fruit will get juicier with longer storage.



*The Persephone statue on the SU campus depicts her begging to be freed from the Underworld. It is outside the Shaffer Art Building.*

The myth of Persephone, the goddess of the Underworld, features pomegranate. Persephone was kidnapped by Hades and taken off to live in the underworld as his wife. Her mother, Demeter (the goddess of the harvest) went

into mourning for her lost daughter and thus all green things ceased to grow. Zeus, the highest ranking of the Greek gods, could not allow the Earth to die, so he commanded Hades to return Persephone. It was the rule of the Fates that anyone who consumed food or drink in the Underworld was doomed to spend eternity there. Hades tricked Persephone into eating six pomegranate seeds while she was his prisoner so she was condemned to spend six months in the Underworld every year. During these six months, Persephone's mother mourns and no longer gives fertility to the earth. Ancient Greeks believed this was the explanation for the seasons.