



# Preserve Today, Relish Tomorrow

## UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

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## Nuts Plus!

**Drying, Preserving, and Storing Walnuts and Almonds at Home:** When walnuts and almonds reach maturity, the hulls start to crack and loosen. Harvest nuts as soon as hulls can be readily removed or kernels will darken and may mold. Many nuts drop off the trees naturally; others need to be knocked off with a long pole or by shaking the branches. Hull and start drying the same day the walnuts or almonds are harvested. Hulls that adhere must be removed by hand or in hulling machines. To help loosen the hulls of green stick-tights of walnuts (nuts with hulls that adhere tightly to the shells), moisten the nuts and pile them in stacks several layers deep, or place them under wet canvas for a day or two.

Immediately after hulling, wash the nuts to prevent dark staining and to remove any mud before drying for storage.

**To blanch almonds:** Cover nuts with cold water and bring shelled almonds to a boil. Drain and when cool enough to handle, slip the skins from the almonds by pressing them between your thumb and fingers. Toasting almonds intensifies their flavor and adds crunch.

**Oven Drying:** Unshelled walnuts and almonds are best dried on trays in a dehydrator or oven. This sterilizes them as well. The outside dimensions of the tray should be at least 1½" smaller than the inside of the oven to allow for air circulation. Using an oven thermometer, keep drying temperature at 110°F. Leave the oven door ajar at least 4" if gas; less if electric. Open door wider or turn off and on as necessary. Check nuts often, stirring occasionally. Keep room well ventilated. To determine when walnuts are dry, take a sample and allow cooling. Walnuts and almonds are dry when kernels and membranes are brittle and no longer soft and rubbery. Note: wear gloves to avoid staining hands when hulling walnuts.

**Sun Drying:** Unshelled walnuts and almonds can be sun-dried (not over 110°F) on well-ventilated trays. Support trays well off the ground to ensure good ventilation. Use trays with raised rims - any size. The bottom can be hardware cloth, small gauge poultry netting, or narrow wooden slats. Stir nuts daily to ensure rapid drying. Cover them if the weather is foggy or rainy and at night to protect from dew, or take them inside.

**Storing:** Walnuts and almonds as well as other nuts keep better and longer if left in the shells. Most nuts need protection from oxygen in the air and from high temperature that may cause the fats in the nuts to become rancid. Store them in a cool dry place. Unbleached nuts may be stored for about a year, but bleached ones should be used within 6 months, as they tend to become rancid more rapidly than unbleached nuts. To retard rancidity, shelled nuts should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Pack into coffee cans or plastic containers with tight fitting lids. They should keep well in the freezer for over a year. They will keep 6 to 9 months in the refrigerator. They will only keep for about 3 months at room temperature. Before storing both shelled and unshelled nuts they should be examined carefully. If any insect infestation or mold is noted, discard the infested nuts. Freezing for at least 3 days will kill most organisms.

### Walnuts - A Super Food

Unique among nuts, walnuts contain the highest amount of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), the plant-based omega-3 essential fatty acid required by the human body. In addition to essential ALA/omega-3 fatty acids, walnuts rank high in antioxidants and provide a convenient source of protein (4 grams) and fiber (2 grams).

You'll find walnuts on numerous "superfood" lists because of their exceptional nutrient profile and the fact that walnuts earned the first approved health claim by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration for a whole food.

Source: *Nuts: Safe Methods for Consumers to Handle, Store, and Enjoy*, UC ANR Publication #8460:  
<http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=8406>

**Beer Snack Nuts****Yield: about 4 ½ cups**

- 4 ½ cups shelled raw peanuts
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup water
- Coarse salt to sprinkle



Place peanuts, sugar, ½ tsp salt and water in a heavy Dutch oven and bring to a boil. Continue boiling until all the liquid is absorbed, about 25 to 30 minutes. Stir occasionally and watch as the nuts can burn quickly.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread peanuts on a greased 13x11x1" cookie sheet and sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from oven, stir and sprinkle with coarse salt again. Bake 20 more minutes. Cool completely. Store the nuts in an airtight container.

Source: *Sunset Magazine*, 2001

**Rosemary Mixed Nuts****Yield: about 5 cups**

- 2 cups walnut halves
- 1 cup raw blanched peanuts
- 1 cup whole almonds
- 1 cup whole cashews
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp dried crushed red pepper (optional)

Make rosemary infused olive oil by adding 2 tbsp rosemary to 2 tbsp olive oil. Let sit for several hours or overnight. Then in a large skillet, on medium-high heat, add remaining 1 tbsp olive oil, nuts and toss to coat. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly to avoid scorching the nuts. Remove from heat, add 2 tbsp rosemary infused oil and continue stirring until all the nuts are thoroughly coated and there is no longer a danger that the nuts will burn. Add kosher salt and let nuts cool completely. Store the nuts at room temperature in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

Source: *adapted from Christmas with Southern Living*, 2009

**Brown Sugar and Pepper Pecans****Yield: about 4 cups**

- ¼ cup butter
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 to 1 ½ tsp. cayenne pepper (use less if you don't like them too spicy)
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 cups shelled Pecans
- ¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 275°F. Melt butter in a medium saucepan; stir in brown sugar, peppers and salt. Cook for 1 minute, and then stir in the nuts. Turn onto a baking sheet with shallow sides, scraping the pan to remove all the butter mixture. Spread in a single layer, and then bake for 25 minutes, stirring several times. Remove from oven and sprinkle with sugar. Stir several times while the nuts are cooling.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Source: *Christmas with Southern Living*

**Spicy Maple Walnuts****Yield: about 2 cups**

- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 2 cups (about 7 oz) walnuts

In a small bowl, mix together sugar, salt, pepper, cayenne, ginger and cinnamon; set aside. Pour maple syrup into a large bowl and set aside.

In a large nonstick skillet, toast walnuts over medium-high heat, stirring or shaking pan constantly, until they are hot, about 5 minutes.

Immediately add the nuts to the maple syrup and toss to coat. Stir in the spice mixture until the nuts are evenly coated.

Spread nuts in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet to cool.

Source: *Better Homes & Gardens*

**Maple Glazed Walnuts****Yield: about 2 cups**

- 2 cups walnut halves
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- ⅛ tsp. salt

Preheat dry skillet over medium-high heat. Add walnuts, maple syrup and salt. Cook stirring frequently until syrup is caramelized and nuts are toasted, about 3 minutes. Let cool. Store the nuts in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Source: *California Walnut Board*

**Sour Cream Walnuts****Yield: about 3 cups**

- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup sour cream
- 3 cups walnut halves

Cook and stir sugars with sour cream to soft ball stage (240°F). Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Add walnuts, stirring gently until coated. Spread on pan to cool. Store nuts in an airtight container in refrigerator.

Note: The walnuts need to be cooled to let the candy coating adhere. Plan to make these the night before serving.

Source: *California Walnut Board*

**Honey Glazed Pecans****Yield: about 1 cup**

- 1 cup pecan halves
- ¼ cup honey
- Dash of ground red pepper

Cook pecans, honey and pepper in skillet on medium-high heat for 4 minutes or until mixture simmers and is foamy. Spread onto a greased rimmed baking sheet, separating slightly with a fork. Cool completely.

Serve as a snack or toss to your favorite salad.



Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, 2021

**Caramel Walnuts****Yield: about 2 cups**

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tsps strong brewed coffee
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 cups walnut halves

Combine sugar and coffee in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil; boil for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and stir in cinnamon, vanilla and salt. Remove from heat and add the walnuts to the warm thick liquid. Stir making sure to coat each walnut half well. Place on a waxed paper rimmed baking sheet to cool, separating nuts as you go.

Source: *All Recipes*, 2022

**Sweet-Hot Spiced Pecans****Yield: about 2 cups**

- ⅓ cup sugar
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp. ground allspice
- 2 cups pecan halves

Mix all spices in a bowl then stir in pecan halves. Spread nuts in a single layer on an oiled 10 x 15-inch baking pan. Bake at 300°F, stirring occasionally, until nuts are crisp and lightly browned, about 20- 25 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then use a spatula to loosen nuts from pan. Cool completely. Store the nuts in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Note: Do not double recipe as it will make too many nuts to create a single layer on pan.

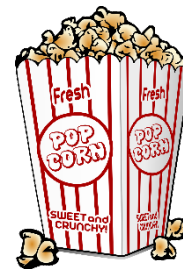
Source: *Sunset Magazine*



## Popcorn Basics: Perfection Every Time

### Stovetop:

Put ½ cup popcorn kernels and 2 Tbsp oil into a large, deep pot. Cover tightly and cook over medium-high heat until kernels just begin to pop, 3 to 4 minutes. Give pot a firm up-and-down shake every 30 seconds or so. When popping has almost subsided, remove pot from heat and transfer popcorn to bowl. Yield: about 10 cups



### Popper:

Some poppers require oil, others use only hot air. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

## Sweet Salty Kettle Corn

**Yield: about 6 servings**

- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ½ cup popcorn kernels
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ¾ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- 4 oz of roasted nuts

Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat; stir in popcorn and sugar. Cover and cook until popping slows down, shaking pan frequently to avoid burning popcorn. Immediately pour into a large bowl and toss with remaining ingredients.

## Black Pepper Kettle Corn

**Yield: about 10 cups**

- ¼ oil
- ½ cup popcorn kernels
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tsp. salt
- ½ to 1 tsp. freshly ground peppe

In a large pot heat ¼ cup of oil over medium-high heat. Add ½ cup popcorn kernels; cook 2 minutes, shaking occasionally. Sprinkle ¼ cup sugar over the kernels. Cover and cook, shaking the pan until the popping slows down. Remove from heat; toss with 2 tsp salt and ½ to 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper.

## Pizza Popcorn

**Yield: about 10 cups**

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 10 cups popped popcorn
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder

In a bowl toss oil and popcorn. Add remaining ingredients and toss again.

## Molasses Popcorn Balls

**Yield: 36 balls**

- ⅔ cup molasses
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ½ cup water
- ⅓ cup vinegar
- ⅓ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 tsps. vanilla
- 3 quarts popped popcorn

Boil molasses, sugar, water, vinegar and salt without stirring to 270° on a candy thermometer or until a drop becomes brittle when dropped in cold water. Remove from heat and add butter and vanilla. Have popped popcorn in a large pan and pour the molasses syrup over it gradually, using a spoon to mix well. Butter hands and form popcorn into balls. Wrap in waxed paper when cool.

## Popcorn with seasonings:

### Base:

- 4 cups popped popcorn
- 1 tsp of oil

Prepare popcorn in either a microwave or traditionally on the stove.  
Spray or drizzle oil onto popcorn, tossing to evenly coat.

Sprinkle seasoning mix over popcorn and toss to coat once more. Serve warm.

### Parmesan Garlic

- 4 Tbsp. Parmesan Cheese
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. dried Italian herbs
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)
- ½ tsp. salt

Whisk together the dry ingredients in a bowl. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

### Sage Butter

- 4 Tbsp. melted butter
- 2 tsp. dried sage
- ½ tsp. salt

Whisk the ingredients together. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

### Orange Butter

- 4 tbsp butter
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp dried orange peel
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt

Melt the butter with the sugar and orange peel, stirring constantly until sugar is melted.

For the following: whisk together the dry ingredients in a bowl.  
Store in an airtight container in the pantry.  
When ready to serve, shake the seasoning mix over your popcorn.

### Cinnamon Sugar

- 8 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 ½ tsp. salt

### Ranch

- ½ tsp. dried dill
- ½ tsp. dried chives
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper

**Gingerbread**

- 1 ½ Tbsp. powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- ¼ tsp. cloves

**Coconut Curry**

- 1 Tbsp. unsweetened shredded coconut
- ½ tsp. curry powder
- ¼ tsp. salt

**Dorito**

- 2 Tbsp. Nutritional yeast
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. cumin
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. chili powder
- ¼ tsp. salt

**Mexican Chocolate**

- 1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp. powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Pinch of cayenne pepper

**Taco**

- 1 Tbsp. taco seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. nutritional yeast

**BBQ**

- 3 Tbsp. smoked paprika
- ½ tsp. chipotle chili powder
- 1 ½ Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder

**Furikake**

- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- 3 Tbsp. Furikake seasoning
- 1 tsp. lime zest
- 1 tsp. lemon zest

**Truffle Herb**

- 1 tsp. truffle oil
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
- 2 Tbsp. grated Romano cheese

**Other ideas:**

- Sprinkle with Apple Pie Spice
- Sprinkle with Pumpkin Pie Spice
- Sprinkle with Everything Bagel

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