

12 Great Ways to Use...

Dates

If you haven't experimented with dates in your kitchen, start with the large, soft, creamy and delicious Medjool dates, grown in the United States in the Bard Valley between Phoenix and San Diego. They deliver special tastes and textures to a wide range of dishes, adding great bursts of flavor to stews, tagines, curries, and grain dishes, or providing the grace note to cooked pasta. Look for them in the produce section of your local grocery store.

- 1.** Think salads. Remove the pits, combine with greens, and add apples, pistachios, and a sprinkling of gorgonzola cheese. Toss with balsamic or citrus vinaigrette.
- 2.** Add dates, mandarin orange slices, and almond slivers to Greek yogurt to create a filling breakfast parfait.
- 3.** Make energy bars. Combine dates, cashews, almonds, cocoa powder, shredded coconut, vanilla, and a little water and blend until it reaches dough consistency. Press into a pan and chill for an hour before serving.
- 4.** Sauté onions and mix with dates (pitted and chopped), whole grain breadcrumbs, chopped pistachio nuts, and herbs. Cut a pocket into a chicken breast and fill pocket with the mixture. Brush both sides with olive oil and bake.
- 5.** Top flatbreads/pizzas with mozzarella cheese, caramelized onions, dates (pitted and chopped) and rosemary. Broil or bake and serve.
- 6.** Sauté onions, carrots, and red peppers. Cook quinoa and add vegetable mixture, diced dates, and torn mint leaves. Sprinkle with sliced almonds and feta cheese.
- 7.** Combine canned tuna with avocados, berries, apples, and sliced dates for a creamy spread.
- 8.** Combine dates with nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts) and dried cranberries and eat this filling, tasty mixture on the go.
- 9.** Toss spinach in a bowl with toasted walnuts, chopped dates, olive oil, sautéed garlic, feta cheese and lemon juice. Add to whole grain pasta for a quick, tasty dinner.
- 10.** For a salsa, combine chopped dates, avocado, kiwis, red onion, bell pepper, cilantro, and jalapeno. Toss with lemon juice in a bowl.
- 11.** Mix things up with a versatile date marinade. Puree dates with a little water in a food processor. Combine the paste with mangoes, honey, lemon juice, garlic powder, and ginger.
- 12.** Carefully remove the pits from dates and replace each with a whole almond. Eat these snacks on the go or coat with honey and cinnamon for a sweet treat.



Photo courtesy of Bard Valley Medjool Date Growers Association