

# HOW TO CHOOSE AND STORE PECANS

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Pecans are sold in various sections of a supermarket, often in the baking aisle, produce section and snacking aisle with other nuts. They're especially abundant in grocery stores during pecan harvest and the holiday season – October to December. However, you can easily buy pecans all year long.

Like most nuts, pecans are available shelled and unshelled. **Shelled pecans** come as halves or pieces, raw or roasted (oil and dry roasted), and salted or unsalted. You can also find glazed and flavored varieties of pecans in bags, single-serve pouches and resealable canisters.

**Additionally, you can purchase a variety of pecan-based products, such as pecan oil, pecan butter, pecan milk and pecan meal.**

When buying packaged shelled pecans, look for a freshness date on the label. If you can see the kernels, they should be plump, golden brown and uniform in size.

## TYPES OF PECANS

Pecan halves vary in size, ranging from "mammoth" to "small topper." U.S. grade standards for nuts are voluntary, so you may see "Fancy" on the label of shelled nuts, which is the highest quality awarded based on golden color, full-bodied and solid kernel structure.

**There are more than 1,000 types of pecans**, although the majority of pecans grown in the United States are focused on a few dozen varieties. As a salute to the pecan's history as an indigenous nut, many pecan varieties or cultivars are named after Native American tribes, such as **Wichita, Cheyenne, Sioux and Apache.**



Wild or native pecans are the indigenous pecans that grow naturally in groves, often near rivers and creeks. **Wild pecans make up about 30 percent of the U.S.**

**pecan crop**, compared to the newer varieties or cultivars of pecans that have been planted in orchards.

Typically, you will not find wild pecans identified on the label, however, some brands do specify "natives" or "wild-harvested." Wild pecans are available in some retail outlets and can be ordered online.

You won't typically see the pecan variety on the label of a package of pecans, but you will notice the various sizes and colors, which are the main differences among shelled pecan varieties. Some pecans are a brighter, golden brown, while others are more amber.

## HOW TO STORE



To protect the pecan's rich oils and buttery taste, do not store shelled pecans at room temperature. **For the best quality, always keep your shelled pecans in the refrigerator.** They'll keep for about nine months in an airtight container, and up to

two years in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer. Pecans can be thawed and frozen repeatedly during the two-year freezing period without loss of flavor or texture. You do not need to thaw pecans before using them in recipes. However, it's best to let frozen pecans reach room temperature if you want to grind them for pecan meal. **For in-shell pecans, you can store them in a cool, dry place for up to a year.**

**For more information, visit [AmericanPecan.com](http://AmericanPecan.com)**

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