

Pecans

You probably know that much tradition, toil, and talent goes into the creation of a rich pecan pie, but do you know how much story, ritual, and dependency are wrapped up in the pecan itself?

The pecan is a cultural delight throughout the nation with roots in Texas and Louisiana.

When you pass over the San Gabriel River near Temple, Texas, take notice of the luscious thickets of pecan trees gathered in groves near the river banks. The Texas Native American built his life, travels, and nomadic diet around the pecan tree and its life-sustaining nut. Rivers like the San Gabriel served as an artery for such tribes as the Wichita, Tonkawa, and Karankawa Indians, partly due to the steady source of pecans in the area. Today many people enjoy the pecan not only for the delicious meals that use the nut, but the pecan is also known to promote a healthy heart by providing protein, lowering bad cholesterol, raising vitamin E levels, and increasing nutrient and fiber intake.

If you travel east to New Orleans, you'll be in the proclaimed birthplace of the pecan pie. Native Americans very early on introduced the French in that area to this delicious and nutritious nut. The newcomers added some syrup and whipped cream, and this holiday favorite was born!

Today, pecan trees cover about a million acres world-wide, and produce 200 - 300 million pounds of pecans annually. In an average year, Texas will be among the leaders in pecan production and harvest, with a crop of about 60 million pounds of pecans.

Back in 1921, a group of pecan farmers got together to form an entity known as the Texas Pecan Growers Association. This growers association now resides in Bryan, Texas, adjacent to Texas A&M University, an agricultural leader and innovator of pecan research and production.

So when you or your grandma bakes a pecan pie, you're carrying on a nutty tradition of old that not only spices up the culture and history of this area, but also adds fun flavor for your taste buds!

Source(s):

Bragg Pecans. (n.d.). Pecan History. Retrieved on November 7, 2010 from <http://www.texaspecans.com>

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