

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europeans use nuts in every course of the meal, but nuts really shine in their desserts, cookies, and pastries. Almonds, walnuts, and chestnuts are commonly used for traditional recipes. If Eastern Europe is famous for eating nuts, California is unquestionably famous for growing them.

California Spotlight

California produces the largest supply of almonds in the world. With more than 6,000 growers and 100 almond processors, California produces approximately 80 percent of the world's almonds. Walnuts are produced on approximately 350,000 acres, primarily between Redding and Bakersfield. California walnuts account for one-third of the world's supply.

Phenomenal Flowers

Almonds produce ordinary blossoms, while walnuts produce a long, cylindrical petal-less flower cluster called a catkin. Almonds rely on honeybees for cross pollination between different varieties of almond trees planted in alternate rows. Walnut trees rely mainly on wind pollination, with the wind transferring pollen between male and female flowers.

Which picture above shows an almond blossom? Which picture shows a catkin? What external structures support survival, growth, and reproduction?

Nuts: They're On A Roll!

Nut rolls are a popular dessert throughout Eastern Europe, particularly at weddings and other holidays. Recipes vary widely from region to region. They are known as *patica* in Slovenian, *struda orzechami* in Polish, *orechovník* in Slovak, *poitica* in Croatian, *orehijaca* in Hungarian, *orehijaca* in Serbian, *banitsa* in Bulgarian—just to “name” a few.

Use online resources to identify the countries associated with each of the languages featured above. Then, label each country correctly on a map of Eastern Europe.

Standard: CA History-Social Science: HSS Analysis Skill K-5

Did You Know?

Walnuts and almonds are harvested by a machine that vigorously shakes the tree, causing the nuts to fall to the ground.

Folklore for Foodies

In Bulgaria, nuts are typically offered as part of the Christmas Eve meal. Each family member chooses a nut and breaks it open to predict their luck in the coming year. A white kernel indicates good health and happiness.

Did You Know?

Walnuts are recognized as the oldest known tree food, dating back to 7000 B.C.

Recipe

Roske

From Croatia to Hungary, these crescent cookies are a big part of Eastern European culinary tradition. California grown walnuts will add a subtle nutty flavor without overpowering the buttery dough.

Dough

2 sticks butter, softened
1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Filling

2 cups flour
½ tsp. baking powder
½ cup milk
½ cup sugar
2 cups walnuts, finely ground
1 Tbsp. butter

Procedure

1. Mix butter, cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla until light and fluffy. Combine flour and baking powder, and add to butter mixture. Divide dough into three equal portions, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate two hours.
2. Prepare walnut filling. In a medium saucepan, combine all filling ingredients. Cook over low heat until the butter has melted. Cool before using.
3. On a well-floured surface, roll a ball of dough to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut into 3-inch squares.
4. Place a rounded teaspoon of filling in the middle of each square. Roll dough from the corner. Place seam side down on a lined baking sheet and shape into a crescent. Repeat with remaining dough.
5. Bake for 20 minutes at 350°F or until edges are light brown. Cool, then dust with powdered sugar.

Number One Nut

Standard: CC Math: 3.MD.B.3
Poll your classmates to determine their favorite nut: almonds or walnuts. Create a bar graph illustrating your results.

Number of Students

Walnuts

Almonds