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Pistachio Benefits

History, health benefits and uses

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History ^{1 2}

The pistachio tree, with origins in the **Middle East and Central Asia**, is believed to be indigenous from **Iran**. It has grown for thousands of years and is even mentioned in the Old Testament.

In Persia (modern day Iran), pistachio trade and ownership of pistachio groves meant riches and high status. During different conquests the nut reached other parts of Europe, such as Greece, Italy and Spain. In the North of the Alps, **pistachio remained unknown for a long time**.

The first plant fossils of the Pistacia Genus were found on the island of Madeira, but the origin of the pistachio tree as such is Asia and specifically Iran. Its cultivation is **one of the oldest in existence**, as it's known that the Egyptians used to grow it. Later, the Greeks and the Romans brought it into the Mediterranean Basin from Syria. This crop arrived on the Iberian Peninsula in Roman times, with the Arabs later specialising in its cultivation.

The pistachio, which belongs to the **Anacardiaceae family**, has male and female trees. If a female flower fails to be pollinated by the pollen of the male tree, it's impossible for the tree to bear fruit. It's believed that the Moors were unaware of this aspect and eliminated the male trees because they didn't bear fruit, which rendered the females unproductive, so they were eliminated too.

After World War II the pistachio image gradually changed from an expensive baking additive to a popular snack.

I bet you
didn't know
that...

National Pistachio Day
is on the **26th of February**

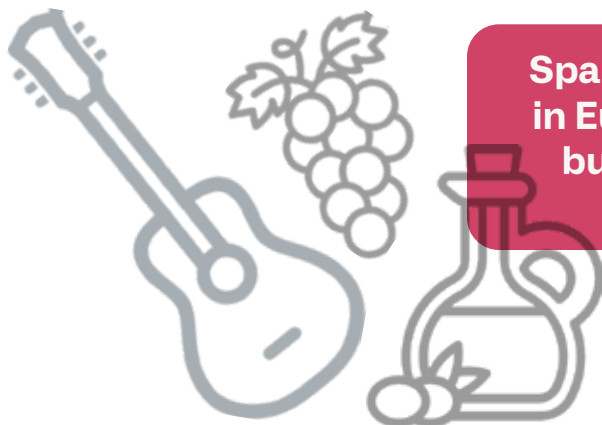


Distribution and conditions ^{3 4 5}



Regions suitable for pistachio production are those with long, hot, and dry summers and mild winters such as areas located between 29 to 39° north latitude (Iran, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Greece, California...).

By 2022, the **U.S. Iran and Turkey** took the **top three** spots for pistachio production. With the increase of this nut's production, comes the battle for first place. Overall, these three countries produced 90% of the total share worldwide. The remaining 10% by this time came from Syria, Afghanistan, Spain, and a few more.




Spain is the largest pistachio producer in Europe, and the geographical distribution of pistachio is in Castilla-La Mancha region.



In 2014 the planted area in Spain was just over **4,400 hectares**, 7 years later that figure is **10 times higher**. 80% of the Spanish pistachio production is rainfed, and producers only apply support irrigation in the remaining 20% of the crops to guarantee the harvest. The Spanish pistachio is mainly rainfed so it has a great flavor and a large caliber, which differentiates it from the American pistachio, which is irrigated.

Pistachio Tree

It is a deciduous, long-living, slow-growing tree that reaches a height of 20-33 feet (6-10 meters). Deciduous means that this tree can have only male flowers (male pistachio trees) or female flowers (female pistachio trees).



In order to set fruits, pollen from male trees must travel through the wind to female trees. Only female trees produce fruits.

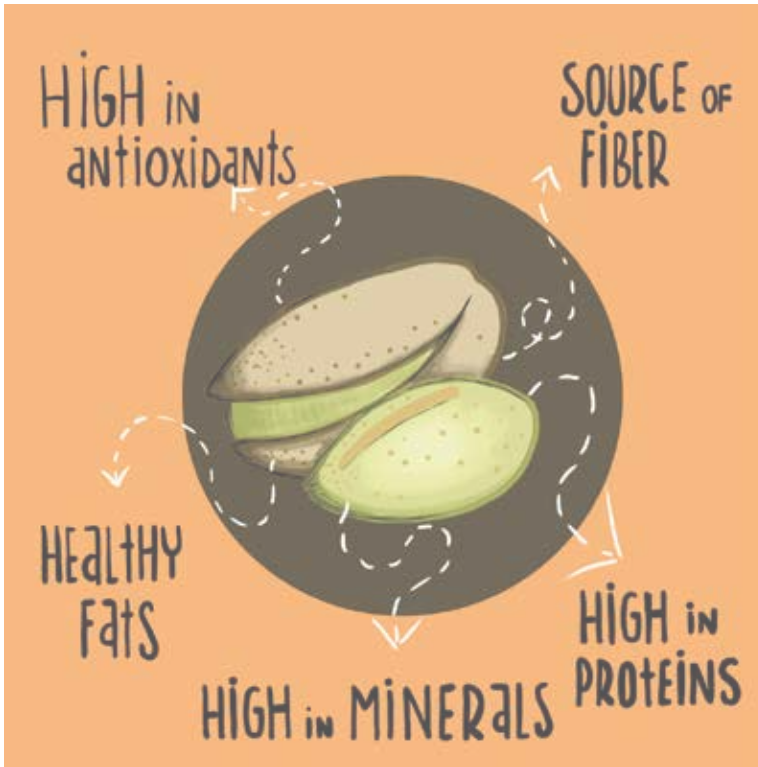
Consequently, if we want to harvest fruits, we must place ideally 1 male pistachio tree in the center of every 9 female pistachio trees. Male pistachio trees can be easily spotted by anyone, because they are normally higher and much more robust than the female trees.

Contrary to other nuts, pistachios grow in clusters, like grapes. The tree bears fruit in shoots created the year before by ordinary buds. It has a tendency towards Alternate Bearing which means producing a lot of fruits in one year and not many fruits in the following year. It normally produces good yields from the 7th year of its age and its productive life can reach 100 years or more.

Pistacia genus includes **11 species**, but **Pistacia vera** is the domesticated pistachio tree that is grown worldwide.

Health benefits 7 8 9 10

We all love eating pistachios; not only they're tasty but, according to research, they are rich in a variety of nutrients and may support weight loss, gut health, blood sugar control, and heart health.



High Antioxidants

Pistachios are among the most antioxidant-rich nuts available. They help protect your cells from oxidative damage.

Source of Fiber

Pistachios are packed with fiber, which is good for your gut bacteria and promoting regularity.

Rich in Healthy Fats:

Pistachios are packed with fiber, which is good for your gut bacteria and promoting regularity.

High in Minerals:

Pistachios are a good source of minerals like potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron. These minerals are important for bone health, muscle functioning, and electrolyte balance.

High in Proteins

They are also a good source of essential amino acids, which must be obtained through our everyday diets.

N u t s

g/100g	Pistachio	Walnut	Almond	Hazelnut
Kcal	<u>572</u>	643	598	646
Fat	<u>45.82</u>	60.71	52.54	62.40
Proteins	<u>21.05</u>	14.29	20.96	15.03
Fiber	10.30	7.10	<u>10.90</u>	9.40
Sugar	7.74	<u>3.57</u>	4.86	4.89

Minerals & Vitamins

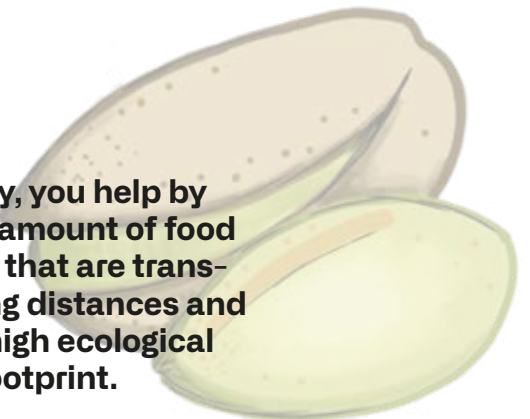


If you want to be sustainable

If you live in Europe, you need to know that avocados, mangos and other tropical fruits **are transported long distances**. The same is with some pistachios that are produced in other countries such as America and Iran (Europe is the second biggest importer of Pistachios after China).

That's why we encourage you to eat organic pistachios that are produced near you like in Spain!

This way, you help by reducing amount of food and nuts that are transported long distances and have a high ecological footprint.



Pistachio Uses ¹¹

Consumption and recipes

If we focus on a community level, in places like Europe they're also a sustainable source of nutrients, as they're related to a Mediterranean climate and their production is increasing in countries like Spain, Greece and Italy.

Pistachios are included in popular recipes such as a variety of desserts, including baklava, halvah, and ice cream and can also be eaten fresh or roasted.

For more info, we leave you a link with some interesting recipes:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/pistachio-recipes>



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