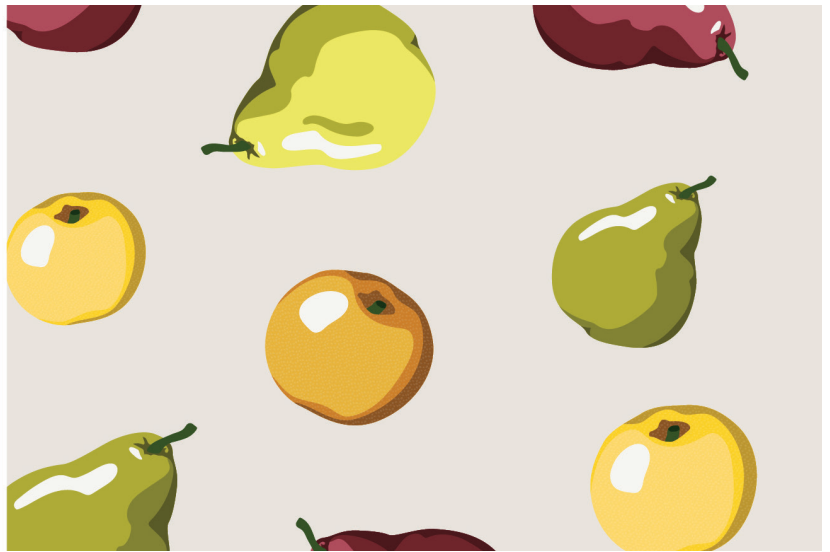




Produce Profile: PEAR



WHAT DEFINES AN ASIAN PEAR?

Asian pears are, with a few exceptions, round in shape. Sweet and mellow in flavor, these pears combine the sweetness of pears with the crispness of apples. Originally popular in Japan, the Korean peninsula and China, they are now well-loved by eaters in the US. Available in varieties of brown, yellow and green hues, help mark the fall season deliciously with Asian pears.

WHAT DEFINES A EUROPEAN PEAR?

European varieties are the pears that North American eaters tend to be the most familiar with. Think Bartlett, D'Anjou and Bosc. Originating in countries in Europe such as France, Belgium or Italy and eventually making their way to North America, New Zealand, Argentina and beyond, these well-loved orchard fruits are recognizable by their shape. Wide-bottomed and with a tapered neck, skin colors range from green, yellow, brown and red.

WHERE DOES OGC SOURCE PEARS?

Boasting over 80% of the country's pear production, the Pacific Northwest is the ideal climate for growing these orchard fruits. With plenty of varieties, both Asian and European in origin, there's a color, size, flavor and texture to meet every eaters' needs. With help from our friends in California as well as imports from South America and New Zealand, shoppers can select from an array of pear options almost year-round!

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO DETERMINE IF A PEAR IS READY TO EAT?

Asian pears are delivered ripe and ready to eat. These varieties should be eaten while firm.

European pears, however, require a little time after delivery. Pears ripen from the inside out, so the best way to determine if it's ripe is to gently push a thumb into its neck. If it gives slightly, it's ready to eat.

WHAT IS "PYRIFORM" AND WHAT ARE "LENTICELS"?

Both terms describe the appearance of a pear.

Pyriform is the technical term for the "true pear" shape. Heavy bottomed, with a slim neck that tapers at the top, think of Bartlett pears when imagining a fruit with the classic pyriform shape.

Lenticels are the pores in the skin of fruit. Seen on pears, apples and even avocados and mangos, they often appear as dots or flecks on the skin. But they're much more than just lovely decorations. Lenticels allow for the exchange of gasses between the environment and the flesh of the fruit.

WHAT IS A "DESSERT" PEAR?

There is a pear for every occasion from fresh eating to baking, poaching and drying. When referred to as a "dessert pear," it means that variety is so sweet and luscious it's best eaten raw. While some eaters with a penchant for sugary treats may disagree, fans of natural sugars may find that these pears perfectly replace cake at the end of a meal.

SHARE THIS INFO WITH EATERS

- Asian pears are still firm when ripe, and can be best enjoyed fresh out of hand, or sliced into salads and on cheese boards. Most varieties are not suited to baking projects due to their juicy nature.
- Most European pear varieties can be tested for ripeness by gently pushing a thumb into its neck. If it gives slightly, it's ripe and ready. Many varieties of European pears are useful for baking projects.
- There's a pear for every purpose! Seek out different varieties for baking, cooking, drying and fresh eating.
- Northwest grown pear season begins in September and modern storage technology extends the crop as far as May in some cases. Pears are available nearly year-round thanks to growers in California, South America and New Zealand.



MERCHANDISING TIPS

- Share ripening information! For eaters, knowing when to consume a pear is likely the largest barrier to purchase. Many shoppers think they dislike pears because they have not eaten them when they're at their best. Use signage and POP to guide eaters into the best way to enjoy pears.
- Be sure to capitalize on all the different shapes, colors and sizes in the pear category by bringing in a mix of options, and think creatively about displays. Pears make it easy to create lovely color breaks.
- Pear season is fairly long for some varieties, but with plenty of options to choose from, keep a steady supply of familiar favorites like Bartlett while also bringing in a rotating cast of specialty varieties. Pears with intriguing shapes like Abate Fetel, unusual sizing like Seckel and colors like Starkrimson add a lot of excitement to displays.
- Big, beautiful displays of fall fruit will entice eaters to try something new. Try pairing a lesser-known fall fruit such as quince or persimmon near standard favorites like Bartlett pears or Fuji apples.
- Apple fans that are pear-wary might just find their ideal fruit in Asian pear varieties. Place Asian pear displays prominently near apples to excite eaters familiar with these fruits and entice curious first-time buyers.
- Pears are often available in promotable volume. Be sure to include a pear in every fall ad, and lean into import varieties as ad items in the spring.
- Sample and offer pairings! Pears can be a little polarizing for some, but it's hard to pass up a slice of perfectly ripened pear when accompanied by cheese. Introducing shoppers to creative ways to eat pears beyond just straight out of hand will get those creative juices flowing.