



Oven-roasted almonds with garlic, rosemary and thyme

Description

Almonds are not nuts

Recipe and photos by **Josee Brisson**

Almonds, like peaches, cherries, and pecans, are not nuts but drupes, that is, fruits with an outer hull and a hard shell that contains a seed. But unlike peaches, we discard the fruit of the almond and eat the seed.

Early Bronze Age growers first domesticated almonds. Archaeologists found them in King Tutankhamun's tomb, but since almond trees were not cultivated in Egypt at the time, they were likely imported from the Levant.

Biblical writers mention almond trees several times. They originated in the Middle East and spread all around the Mediterranean Sea and into North Africa and Europe. Almonds are known as *b?d?m* in Iran, India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Iran, a descendant of these almonds still grows wild. Eaten while immature and still green, they are dipped in sea salt to balance their sourness.

The ancient Greek historian Plutarch speaks of a physician who regularly drank everyone under the table by ingesting five or six bitter almonds. The almond was highly valued in the Middle Ages for its supposed virtue in preventing intoxication.

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In Agatha Christie's books, one of her poisons of choice was cyanide, and "I smell bitter almonds" became a familiar phrase as someone approached the unfortunate victim. This smell of almond from cyanide poisoning comes from the bitter almond. Like many other poisons, bitter almond extract was once ingested as medicine. But the almond we relish today is of the sweet variety.

Almond milk and almond butter are now staples in many diets, good news for individuals with peanut allergies and the lactose intolerant. Those with a sweet tooth can enjoy colourful marzipan, chewy white nougat, crunchy amaretti cookies and ambrosial Amaretto liqueur.

Almonds are rich in vitamins, dietary fibre, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium. We add them to breakfast cereals, yogurt, rice dishes, and salads. They're delicious in a fresh pesto or a Spanish romesco



sauce, or in a handful as a healthy snack. We even apply sweet almond oil to the skin to make it fresh and supple.

Roasted almonds with garlic, rosemary and thyme

Serves 2 people

Preheat oven at 350°

1 cup of raw almonds, skins on
2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon of Aleppo pepper (to taste)
1/2 teaspoon of French grey sea salt
1 small garlic clove, crushed
1 sprig rosemary, leaves removed and finely chopped
2 sprigs thyme, leaves removed and finely chopped

Place the almonds in an oven-proof skillet and add the grey salt. Mix and place in the oven to roast for 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, mix olive oil, Aleppo pepper, garlic, rosemary and thyme.

Remove the almonds from the oven. Add the olive oil mixture and combine until each almond is coated. Return



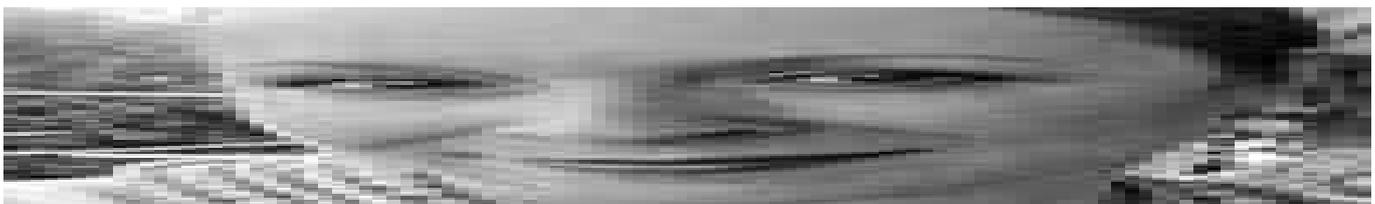
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the almonds warm, with room temperature “Le 1608” – a firm cheese with a washed rind, from Charlevoix, Quebec. Known for its nutty and complex fruity flavours, “Le 1608” uses milk from hardy Canadienne cattle, whose ancestors were brought to Canada from France between 1608 and 1670. But you can opt for a more pungent cheese. Pair with white **Zenato Lugana San Benedetto**, with its notes of almonds and white flowers, or the fragrant **Santi Nello Pinot Nero**, with its fruity aroma and smooth tannins.

My previous recipes in WestmountMag.ca:

[Roasted fresh figs with goat cheese and rose-scented honey](#)

[Grilled Halloumi Cheese with Pomegranate Arils and Syrup](#)





Josee Brisson is passionate about food and an avid student of archaeology, mythology, history, literature, and the arts. She trained as a professional cook at École Hôtelière des Laurentides, in Sainte-Adèle, Québec. Among other food projects, she collaborated on two cookbooks with world-renowned food and wine expert François Chartier, and started a Chef at Home service. Josee is also a translator, researcher and social media community manager. Her first cookbook, L'Apéro: Appetizers & Cocktails, was #1 Best Seller in Appetizer Cooking at Amazon. Here's a link to [Josee's book](#).

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Date Created

February 2018