

# Visions of Dates Dancing in My Head

Dates are actually berries grown on the date palm found predominantly in the Middle East. Fossils discovered by archeologists in Northern Iraq suggest the date palm existed more than 50,000 years ago. The longevity and bountiful productivity of this palm (one cluster of dates may hold between 500-2,000 berries) ensure its place among world religions: a sacred tree revered by Muslims, the “tree of life” according to the Israelis and a vital aspect of a religious ritual (Palm Sunday) among Christians. So treasured is this tree that Israel and Saudi Arabia both consider it a national symbol representing growth and vitality. Referenced more than 50x in the Bible, the date is the oldest fruit cultivated by humans. Prominent historians conclude that it is the date, not the fabled apple, to which Eve succumbed in the Garden of Eden.

Dates have been and continue to be a favorite food among nomads because of their portability, staying power, taste and nutritional integrity. Bedouin tribes in the Middle East have one of the highest levels of date consumption and among the lowest rates of cancer.

Dates are said to:

- be effective in cancer protection because they are rich in plant antioxidants known as polyphenols that are effective in destroying free radicals
- be higher in potassium than bananas. Potassium enables us to maintain a healthy nervous system, recover after work outs, and balance our metabolism.
- enhance our energy stores
- promote healthy aging (compare to refined sugar which prematurely ages us and depletes our immune systems)
- offer a natural balance of minerals including calcium, zinc, copper, magnesium
- be Nature’s dried fruit since fresh dates, true to their desert origins, have only 30% water content

However there is no such thing as a cheap date. Labor intensive practices of hand pollination to ensure adequate yield and the 200 day maturity period following pollination make fresh dates more expensive than other fruits.

While there are more than 25 varieties of dates, my personal favorite at the moment is the fresh medjool date, for its accessibility in most grocery stores (typically near the bananas), its ample size and its soft, caramel flavor. Moroccans reserved these treats for royalty only. People craving sweets but not bigger waistlines also celebrate the medjool for its 66 calorie load.

Katie McDonald

401-965-4486

[bnourished@me.com](mailto:bnourished@me.com)

[www.bnourished.com](http://www.bnourished.com)

Use fresh dates as a sweetener in varied ways:

smoothies

oatmeal with nuts and seeds

trail mix

granola

brown rice or quinoa sprinkled with cinnamon

remove pit and replace with a raw pecan for a pecan pie treat

remove pit and fill with almond or cashew butter for **a post-work out nosh**

### **Cashew Cream**

1 C raw cashews

3/4 C almond, rice or hemp milk, unsweetened

4 medjool dates, fresh and pitted

dash cinnamon or nutmeg (optional-if desired)

Blend in a high powered blender and enjoy as a topping to berries or healthy fruit pies during this holiday season.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Katie McDonald is a certified Holistic Health Coach, raw food chef and instructor. She empowers her clients to become passionate advocates for their health and well-being. Katie meets with clients individually and teaches extensive classes on holistic healing practices at All That Matters in Wakefield, RI. [www.allthatmatters.com](http://www.allthatmatters.com). Because of Katie and Ryan's shared commitment to promoting exceptional health at all levels, she extends a one time only complimentary 30 minute health coach session for all bootcampers.

Please see [www.bnourished.com](http://www.bnourished.com) for more details about Katie and her services. Follow her on Facebook at facebook/bnourished

Katie McDonald

401-965-4486

[bnourished@me.com](mailto:bnourished@me.com)

[www.bnourished.com](http://www.bnourished.com)