

Cooking with Nuts

This is part of our review of organic nuts stocked by Naturally Good Food. We hope you enjoy the hints and tips below, which should make your gluten-free baking easier and perhaps save you some money.

1. Combine a spoonful of organic ground almonds with breadcrumbs and use as a crumb coating for fish and chicken. Ground almonds can also be used to thicken, smooth and enrich a curry.
2. A tablespoon of lightly roasted organic almond flakes can be sprinkled over ice-cream or, for a savoury dish, over steamed trout. Use a shallow frying pan or skillet to roast the almonds. To get a more nutty flavour, try lightly roasting walnuts in a shallow dry pan. Pinenuts are expensive: for many recipes you could substitute blanched slivered almonds (although this does not work for a classic pesto).
3. To remove the skin from organic whole almonds, simply soak for a minute in hot water, remove and squeeze the kernel – the nut will pop out of its little jacket.
4. Blanched almonds can be toasted, finely chopped and sprinkled on to a ginger-shrimp sauté, or added toasted to Chinese vegetable stir-fry dishes.
5. Brazil nuts have a similar taste to macadamia nuts and can be substituted for them in many recipes. This is a particularly good tip for those following an organic diet, as organic macadamia nuts are hard to find.
6. To keep their crunch, add cashew nuts to a dish just before serving (they soften quickly when cooked). For a smooth cashew nut curry, with a rich - almost creamy - texture, soak your cashew nuts before cooking.
7. Hazelnuts can be chopped, ground or sliced and added to breads, cakes, muffins and cookies for added texture and crunch and to give a rich, nutty flavour.
8. Roasted whole hazelnuts, together with rich dried fruits and dark chocolate, make a delicious antioxidant snack.
9. Sprinkle hazelnuts over salads and vegetables for a crunchy texture, nutty flavour and visual appeal.
10. Pecans have a higher fat content than other nuts (mostly monounsaturated fats) and are therefore more perishable. If you're not eating them immediately, keep them from spoiling by double-bagging them and storing in the refrigerator for up to three months, or in the freezer for up to six months.