

Made for each other... Pomegranates and dates

Dates are sweet; pomegranates are tart—together they create a delicious flavor contrast. What makes this mix even better: Each fruit contains different powerful polyphenols, which fight inflammation and keep your arteries clear, according to research from Israel. “When you combine the two fruits, you get an even wider range of protection,” says Michael Aviram, a professor of biochemistry at Technion Rappaport Faculty of Medicine in Haifa. While his study found that pomegranate juice and entire dates (including the pits) are the most effective pairing, Aviram says that any combination of the fruits and seeds will give you heart-healthy benefits. This pork dish definitely delivers.

TIP

Turn this marinade into salad dressing by adding two tablespoons of water.

Pork Tenderloin With Pomegranate and Dates

Serves: 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 60 minutes

- 2 tablespoons pomegranate juice
- 2 pitted dates, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup diced shallots
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ pounds pork tenderloin
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds

1 Preheat the oven to 425°. To a food processor, add pomegranate juice, dates, thyme, garlic, red pepper flakes, shallots, mustard, salt, pepper, and 1 tablespoon olive oil; pulse until smooth. Place pork in a 1-gallon ziplock bag, and pour all but 2 tablespoons of marinade over it. Toss to coat, and let marinate for at least 30 minutes (if longer than a half hour, place in the refrigerator).

2 Heat remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in a cast-iron skillet or other ovenproof pan over medium-high heat. Add pork, searing for 2 minutes on each side. Transfer skillet to oven, and roast meat until it reaches an internal temperature of 145°, about 15 minutes. Remove pork from oven, and brush with reserved marinade; let rest for 5 minutes. Slice pork, and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds. Garnish with additional dates.

*** Nutrition facts per serving:**
278 calories, 11 g fat (2.1 g saturated),
8 g carbs, 36 g protein, 1 g fiber,
425 mg sodium

—Recipe by Kate Parham Kordsmeier