California Walnuts

FOOD PROFESSIONALS GUIDE













Highlighting the walnut's unique qualities, this guide brings its value, versatility, and real-world impact to life for food manufacturing and foodservice professionals.





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A VERSATILE & VALUED INGREDIENT

California walnuts offer food professionals a unique opportunity to elevate their culinary creations. Characterized by distinct flavor, texture, and nutritional profile, walnuts are a versatile, wholesome ingredient that can inspire creativity in both sweet and savory applications. This guide is designed to help you incorporate walnuts in ways that add value, enhance taste, and meet the demands of today's health-conscious consumers.

FLAVOR

Offering a layered, balanced flavor profile, California walnuts support both savory and sweet applications without dominating other ingredients. Subtle sweetness, gentle bitterness, and buttery richness, with savory umami notes become more pronounced through toasting, roasting, or cooking of walnuts. Known for their ability to absorb, carry, and amplify surrounding flavors makes walnuts especially versatile across the menu and consumer product goods.

VALUE

California walnuts provide value as they serve both as a flavorful ingredient and a functional solution. Walnuts' flavor, texture and body have appeal across many applications. Their versatility allows them to be used as a topping, inclusion, crust, filling, or base, supporting both sweet and savory menu items, innovation efforts, and cross-utilization without added complication. This combination of culinary performance, nutritional credibility, and sensory appeal creates value that consumers recognize and operators can confidently leverage.

NUTRITION

California walnuts are unique among nuts because a one-ounce serving provides 18g of total fat, "healthy fats" including 2.5 of monounsaturated fats, and 13g of polyunsaturated fat, as well as 1.5g of saturated fat. Of the 13g of polyunsaturated fat, 2.5g is the essential plant-based omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which walnuts are the only nut to contain a significant amount of ALA. One ounce of walnuts also offers four grams of protein, two grams of fiber, and is a good source of magnesium (10% DV) and vitamin B6 (10% DV).

VERSATILITY ACROSS MENU SEGMENTS AND CUISINES

Walnuts have traveled across cultures and continents for centuries, becoming embedded in cooking traditions worldwide, and this global journey makes them a valuable tool for cooks, chefs, menu developers, and product developers anywhere food and beverages are celebrated. Their unique texture and naturally rich yet neutral flavor allow them to integrate seamlessly into diverse culinary styles, from Middle Eastern and Mediterranean sauces to Latin American street foods, Asian snacks, European pastries, and modern American menus and consumer packaged goods. This broad adaptability gives professionals the ability to use walnuts across beverages, dips, sauces, bowls, baked goods, desserts, and snack formats while delivering both comfort and discovery.

SOLUTION

Walnuts offer a great, whole food solution. Their unique nutrient composition supports clean labeling, ingredient transparency, and the growing demand from consumers for plant-based offerings. As nutritional needs shift through life stages, walnuts continue to deliver relevant benefits. The versatility in flavor and texture makes walnuts much more than a topping or garnish. As a flexible, whole ingredient, walnuts perform across a wide range of prepared food applications. From school meals and family-style entrées to grab-and-go snacks, premium ice cream, and sauces, this adaptability allows manufacturers and operators to rely on a single ingredient that delivers consistency, functionality, and nutrition across multiple menu categories.



HISTORY, HERITAGE & SUSTAINABILITY

More than 99% of the walnuts grown in the U.S. come from the fertile soils of California's Central Valley. California (USA) leads in global walnut trade.

The walnuts' history has been traced back thousands of years, dating back to 7000 B.C. in parts of ancient Persia. Like many crops grown thousands of years ago, they grew wild and naturally along trade routes and made their way through Greece and were a staple cultivation through the Roman Empire. Spanish missionaries brought walnuts to the Americas in the 1700s, and the walnuts were able to flourish in California due to the Mediterranean climate.

The California walnut industry is made up of multi-generational family farms. California walnut growers and handlers (processors) have spent more than a century caring for the land, sharing a commitment to public health, and supporting the communities we serve. To grow this nutritious food for generations to come, they continue their focus on delivering the best quality walnuts from the farm to the consumer while lessening impacts on the earth.



SUSTAINABILITY

Growing and processing walnuts is a serious labor of love, backed by generations of expertise, constant innovation, a focus on product quality and a deep respect for the land. Orchards grow for decades, not seasons. During the trees' lifespan of 30–40-plus years, the same trees are touched by generations of farmers, caretakers, and harvesters.

California walnut growers and processors support research and innovation in water quality and conservation, soil health, energy use and air quality. The industry is constantly seeking out and incorporating new methods of growing and handling walnuts that minimize waste, enhance productivity and preserve and protect natural resources at every step of the process.



From Farm to Table

THE WALNUT JOURNEY & INDUSTRY INTEGRITY

California's Mediterranean-style climate and soil provide ideal conditions to grow walnuts. Walnuts thrive in temperate climates, where California's cold temperatures in the winter months allow trees to go dormant and "rest," with subsequent warmer temperatures in the spring that "wake up" the trees for the next season's crop.

Walnuts are harvested annually from late September to November. First, they are removed from trees by mechanical shakers, which shake the nuts to the ground. Walnuts are then quickly swept from the orchard floor by mechanical harvesters and taken to processing facilities where they are cleaned and sorted to be sold as kernels or in the shell. To preserve freshness, walnuts are kept in cool, temperature controlled, dry storage from harvest until shipped to customers around the world.

After harvest, growers will conduct pruning and cleaning of the orchards to ready them for winter. In the spring, trees will begin bloom in April and May to start the development of new nuts. During the summer months, walnuts grow rapidly forming a hard shell around the nut. Inside the shell, the kernel matures while the green outer hull enlarges and remains soft until later in the season.

The utilization of the entire walnut is an important part of the industry's sustainability efforts. The shell can be ground up and used in a variety of applications such as cosmetics, as an abrasive, in water filtration, in plastics, as fillers, and even as an energy source. When feasible, hulls removed at harvest time are incorporated into the orchard soil, recycling these vital nutrients. Beyond hulls and shells, during winter pruning, the removed branches are chipped or shredded, with the residue being left in the orchard to decompose, which increases its soil health, tilth, and water-holding capacity.

From multi-generational farms to your operation, California walnuts are handled with great care and attention every step of the way. California walnuts are grown, harvested, and processed under strict quality control standards, including federal and state food safety regulations, to deliver a high-quality food.

ALLERGEN CONSIDERATIONS

It is estimated that 0.5-1.0% of the population has a tree nut allergy.[1] Allergy to one tree nut does not mean that an individual is allergic to other tree nuts, although certain tree nut allergies are more closely related. In the U.S., plain-language labeling on packaged foods is required for 12 different tree nuts, including walnuts. It is important to follow all proper protocols to avoid cross contamination in your kitchen or manufacturing facility.







[1]American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

HEALTH IN A NUTSHELL



Walnuts are a healthy food that offers nutrition that meets the needs of today's consumers.

LASTING ENERGY

A one-ounce serving provides 190 calories, which is equivalent to 1/4 cup or 28g of walnuts.

HEALTHY FATS

Among tree nuts, walnuts are the only nut primarily comprised of polyunsaturated fats. A one-ounce serving provides 18g of total fat, "healthy fats" including 2.5g of monounsaturated fats, and 13g of polyunsaturated fats, as well as 1.5g of saturated fat.

ESSENTIAL PLANT BASED OMEGA-3

Walnuts are the only nut with an excellent source of the omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid, 2.5g per one-ounce serving (ALA). The adequate intake for omega-3 ALA is 1.6 g/day for men and 1.1 g/day for women.[2]

PLANT PROTEIN

With 4g of protein per one-ounce serving, walnuts provide an essential nutrient the body needs to grow, build muscle and bone, and stay healthy. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans also emphasize nuts as a nutrient-dense protein source.[1]

FIBER

Fiber supports heart health, gut health, and weight management. Walnuts contain 2g (7% DV) of fiber per one-ounce serving.

VITAMIN B6

Walnuts are a good source of vitamin B6 (10% DV), which is involved in nutrient metabolism, cognitive development and immune system functioning.

MAGNESIUM

Walnuts are a good source of magnesium (10% DV), which supports muscles and nerves in the body as well as bone health.

MELATONIN

Walnuts contain melatonin (3.5 +/- 1.0 ng/g), an important plant compound related to maintaining a healthy sleep cycle.[3]

COPPER

Walnuts are an excellent source of copper (50% DV), an essential mineral that plays a role in brain development, immune system functioning and blood vessel development.

MANGANESE

Walnuts are an excellent source of manganese (40% DV), an essential mineral that supports the metabolism of nutrients, bone formation and normal functioning of the immune system.

American Heart Association CERTIFIED Meets Criteria For Heart-Healthy Food

Per one ounce serving.

HEART HEALTH

Research has investigated how eating walnuts affects various factors related to heart health such as cholesterol, blood pressure, inflammation and blood vessel function. Walnuts are Heart-Check certified by the American Heart Association.[4]

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS



California walnuts represent "real food" nutrition—whole, minimally processed, and nutrient-dense; California walnuts embody the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans core message to return to whole foods and for the first time, they are featured on the Guideline icon.

California walnuts naturally support nutrition needs in multiple life stages.

- Walnuts are a source of plant-based protein, and a healthy fats source as referenced in the Guidelines.
- As discussed in the Guidelines[1], walnut butter can play a role in early introduction of allergenic foods at 6 months of age.

Teens, young adults pregnant/lactating women, and older adults can get an excellent source of omega-3 ALA (2.5g/oz) and additional healthy fats* with every 1 ounce serving of California walnuts.

Source references:
[1]U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030. January 2026. Available at realfood.gov.
[2]Dietary reference intakes for energy, carbohydrate, fiber, fat, fatty acids, cholesterol, protein, and amino acids (Macronutrients) (2005) NAS. IOM. Food and Nutrition Board.
[3]Reiter RJ, Manchester LC, Tan DX. Melatonin in walnuts: influence on levels of melatonin and total antioxidant capacity of blood. Nutrition. 2005;21(9):920–924. doi:10.1016/ jnut.2005.02.005
[4]California walnuts are certified by the American Heart Association. Heart-Check certification does not apply to research or information unless expressly stated. Supportive but not conclusive research shows that eating 1.5 ounces of walnuts per day, as part of a low saturated fat and low cholesterol diet, and not resulting in increased caloric intake may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Nutrients in 1oz and 100g of English (California) Walnuts

Nutrient	Units	1oz	100g
Calories	kcal	190	650
Total fat	g	18	65
Saturated fat	g	1.5	6
Trans fat	g	0	0
Polyunsaturated fat	g	13	47
Linoleic acid (18:2)	g	11	38
Linoleic acid (18:3)	g	2.5	9
Monounsaturated fat	g	2.5	9
Cholesterol	mg	0	0
Sodium	mg	0	0
Total Carbohydrate	g	4	14
Dietary Fiber	g	2	7
Total Sugars	g	1	3
Added Sugars	g	0	0
Protein	g	4	15
Vitamin D	mcg	0	0
Calcium	mg	30	100
Iron	mg	0.8	2.9
Potassium	mg	130	440
Vitamin A	mcg RAE	0	0
Vitamin C	mg	0	1
Vitamin E	mg	0	0.7
Vitamin K	mcg	0	3
Thiamin	mg	0.1	0.3
Riboflavin	mg	0.04	0.2
Niacin	mg	0.3	1.1
Vitamin B6	mg	0.2	0.5
Folate	mg DFE	30	100
Vitamin B12	mcg	0	0
Pantothenic acid	mg	0.2	0.6
Phosphorus	mg	100	350
Magnesium	mg	45	160
Zinc	mg	0.9	3.1
Selenium	mcg	1	5
Copper	mg	0.45	1.6
Manganese	mg	0.97	3.41
Choline	mg	10	40
Betaine	mg	0.1	0.3
Melatonin	ng	3.5 +/- 1.0	3.5 +/- 1.0
Tocopherol, Alpha	mg	0	0.7
Tocopherol, Beta	mg	0.04	0.15
Tocopherol, Gamma	mg	5.91	20.83
Tocopherol, Delta	mg	.54	1.89
Carotene, Beta	mcg	3	12
Carotene, Alpha	mcg	0	0
Cryptoxanthin, Beta	mcg	0	0
Lutein + Zeaxanthin	mcg	3	9



Scan the QR code to read about the 30-plus years, the California Walnut industry has supported health-related research on the impact of walnut consumption.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. FoodData Central, 2019. fdc.nal.usda.gov.

G = Gram; MG = Milligram; MCG = Microgram; % DV= % Daily Value; RAE = Retinol Activity Equivalent; DFE = Dietary Folate Equivalent

WALNUT MARKET FORMS

California walnuts are available in a range of different sizes and colors to fit all recipe and menu needs. Walnuts are most commonly sold as a blend of halves and pieces.

Scan the QR code for information on California walnut forms.



HALVES

Large and visually appealing, walnut halves are best suited for garnishing dishes or adding a crunchy topping to salads, and savory entrees. Halves are perfect for trail mixes, walnut shrimp combinations, and whole nut snack mixes.



MEDIUM PIECES

These pieces work well in batters, doughs, and fillings where a more uniform distribution of walnut flavor and texture is desired. Medium piece form compliments muffin mixes, chocolate confectionary, and as a plant-based meat alternative.



LARGE PIECES

Perfect for adding texture to hearty salads, they offer a satisfying crunch while still blending well with other ingredients. Large pieces lend themselves to being a perfect fit for functional bars, ice creams, granolas, and cereals.



SMALL PIECES

Ideal for use in coatings, such as protein crusts, or in sauces where a finer consistency is needed.

Specialty Forms

Walnuts are versatile and can be transformed into walnut butter, oil, flour, and meal.



WALNUT MEAL

Finely milled walnuts can be incorporated into baked goods, adding a subtle nutty flavor and improving moisture retention. Walnut meal is an incredibly versatile form as a thickening agent in sauces, an alternative to breadcrumbs for coating baked or deep-fried foods, or as a base for plant-based dishes.

WALNUT FLOUR/ PROTEIN POWDER

Walnut flour, sometimes referred to as walnut protein powder, is an upcycled ingredient created from the defatted walnut cake produced during walnut oil extraction. Milled to a consistent fine texture, it offers a naturally gluten-free alternative to grain-based flours while contributing a deeper, richer walnut flavor to doughs and batters. Its high protein content and functional fat profile make it valuable in both culinary and commercial applications, where it can replace traditional flours for baking, thickening, and coating, or lightly toasted and used as a flavorful topping.



WALNUT BUTTER

Cooks, chefs, and product developers have endless opportunities when walnuts are ground and transformed into a smooth butter. Walnut butter aligns well with current innovation trends, including functional ingredients, global flavor profiles, and plant-based menu and consumer product goods.



WALNUT OIL

Cold-pressed walnut oil is delicate and should be used only as a finishing oil. Do not expose it to heat, or you will lose both flavor and nutrition. It works well on salads, chilled soups, and simple vegetable dishes where even a small amount can lift the flavors. In desserts, it can be used as the primary fat in quick breads. Roasted walnut oil is produced from toasted nuts. This characteristic renders it highly suitable when a distinct walnut aroma is desired in the final preparation, particularly effective in classical vinaigrettes and warm vegetable dishes and it is appropriate to use it as a finishing oil or incorporate it into dressings where a prominent nutty flavor is desired.

Refined walnut oil has a neutral flavor profile and a higher smoke point, resulting from the removal of most impurities and aromatic compounds. This characteristic gives it greater versatility in culinary applications. It is suitable for moderate-heat tasks, such as sautéing, without the risk of scorching or bitterness.

GREEN WALNUTS

Immature green walnuts are harvested before the shell forms, making the entire fruit usable and giving it a firm exterior, tender interior, and a flavor characterized by gentle bitterness, fresh resin notes, and early nut aroma. In California, they are available only for a few weeks in May and June, with limited supply. Traditionally used across Europe, green walnuts are preserved through pickling and liqueur making, a practice now expanding in California where producers are creating green walnut liqueurs from locally grown fruit. These methods enable the distinctive flavor of green walnuts to be used year-round in professional kitchens, beverages, and product development.



SKINLESS WALNUTS

Skinless, also known as blanched, walnuts represent an important innovation for both culinary and product development work. Removing the outer pellicle changes the entire flavor profile and creates a new ingredient. Without the skin, the flavor becomes milder and the color lightens noticeably, giving developers a walnut that performs well in applications where a darker color or more pronounced bitterness would be distracting. This opens the door to creating light-colored creams, smooth sauces, delicate dips, confections, and snack mixes that highlight walnut richness without the stronger notes typically associated with the skin.

PURCHASING & STORAGE GUIDELINES

California walnuts are accessible through various purchasing channels, or directly from the source, offering flexibility for different operational sizes. They can be obtained through national and regional distributors, produce distributors, specialty ingredient suppliers, and cash-and-carry foodservice outlets. Walnuts are available in conventional and organic forms and may carry certifications such as halal, or kosher, with the full list of available certifications detailed on the industry's list of handlers. Multichannel availability enables professionals to incorporate California walnuts easily, whether sourcing raw ingredients, components, or value-added products within their operation.

California walnuts are available in various commercial packaging formats designed to support different volumes and operational needs, including bulk totes, bag-in-box formats, lined bags, and even cans. These options provide flexibility for foodservice, manufacturing, and product development applications. Many walnut products are offered vacuum-packed or nitrogen-flushed to reduce oxygen exposure and help preserve freshness, flavor, and functional performance.

Scan the QR code to review direct walnut sources.

Storage Recommendations: Refrigeration, Freezing, and Inventory Rotation

To limit exposure to air and light, once opened, walnuts should always be stored in non-transparent air and moisture-tight containers. This also prevents the walnuts from absorbing the surrounding odors. Consistent inventory rotation using FIFO (first in and first out) ensures peak freshness, while maintaining cold temperatures supports both flavor stability and the nutritional value that makes California walnuts a reliable ingredient in professional kitchens.
Cold storage can minimize primary walnut quality deterioration problems such as food safety risks, lipid oxidation (rancidification) and kernel phenolic oxidation (darkening). Rotate walnut stock to optimize shelf life. Store under cool and dry conditions (<10°C/50°F and <65% relative humidity). For longer-term storage, up to six months: refrigerate at 0°C (32°F) to 5°C (41°F) and <65% relative humidity.



For more information download California Walnuts Best Practices for Handling & Storage.

THE 360° SENSORY EXPERIENCE OF CALIFORNIA WALNUTS

The 360° Sensory Experience of California Walnuts is rooted in a core understanding of what walnuts are, why they matter, and how they change through culinary applications. California walnuts are an agricultural ingredient with distinct varietal characteristics, natural fats, and functional properties that influence flavor, texture, and performance. Understanding why walnuts behave the way they do, from fat composition to sensitivity to handling and storage, supports more informed decisions in sourcing, preparation, and application in recipes. Through culinary processes such as cutting, grinding, roasting, blending, and incorporation into recipes and product formulation, walnuts develop new sensory expressions and functional roles.

Scan to downloaded self-guided sensory experience.



FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

More than a raw ingredient, walnuts are a foundation for culinary innovation and a canvas for creating new flavors and textures. Walnuts move from a wholesome ingredient to a transformed component, to a final build, which unlocks a range of opportunities for food professionals.

INGREDIENT



Halves, pieces, meal, and flour, are some of the various forms walnuts appear in as an ingredient. The ingredient recipe-ready formats can be utilized in culinary, foodservice or manufacturing settings.

COMPONENT



Walnut butter, walnut cream, or walnuts as a plant-based meat alternative are ways of transforming the wholesome ingredient into a component. These new components have been created through fundamental cooking techniques to give food professionals a wider palette to create new food and beverage items to meet today's expectations.

BUILD



At the build stage, walnuts help shape complete menu items and packaged products. Components made from walnuts can be stacked, layered, and assembled into final dishes that deliver cohesive flavor, texture, and visual impact.

Example: Empanadas

An empanada offers a clear example. Walnut flour enriches the dough, chopped walnuts add texture and depth to the filling, and a cilantro lime walnut cream completes the dish. Each form is an ingredient or component on its own, but together they create a unified build.



Transforming walnuts from an ingredient to component to a recipe build, professionals can streamline development, ensure consistency, and elevate the sensory quality of their offerings. Walnuts in any form serve as dependable building blocks that deliver nutrition, flavor, and versatility across the entire foodservice landscape.

FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

California walnuts are uniquely suited to a wide range of culinary and production settings because of their consistent response to fundamental techniques. From restaurant kitchens to test kitchens, research and development labs, and large-scale manufacturing facilities, walnuts behave predictably when exposed to physical, thermal, and moisture-related processes.

PHYSICAL DYNAMICS

Techniques such as chopping, crushing, grinding, milling, or blending alter particle size, increase surface area, and trigger the release of natural oils. These changes affect mouthfeel, binding capacity, and flavor distribution, allowing walnuts to serve as crunchy toppings, textural inclusions, or smooth, cohesive bases for sauces, spreads, fillings, and dips.

THERMODYNAMICS

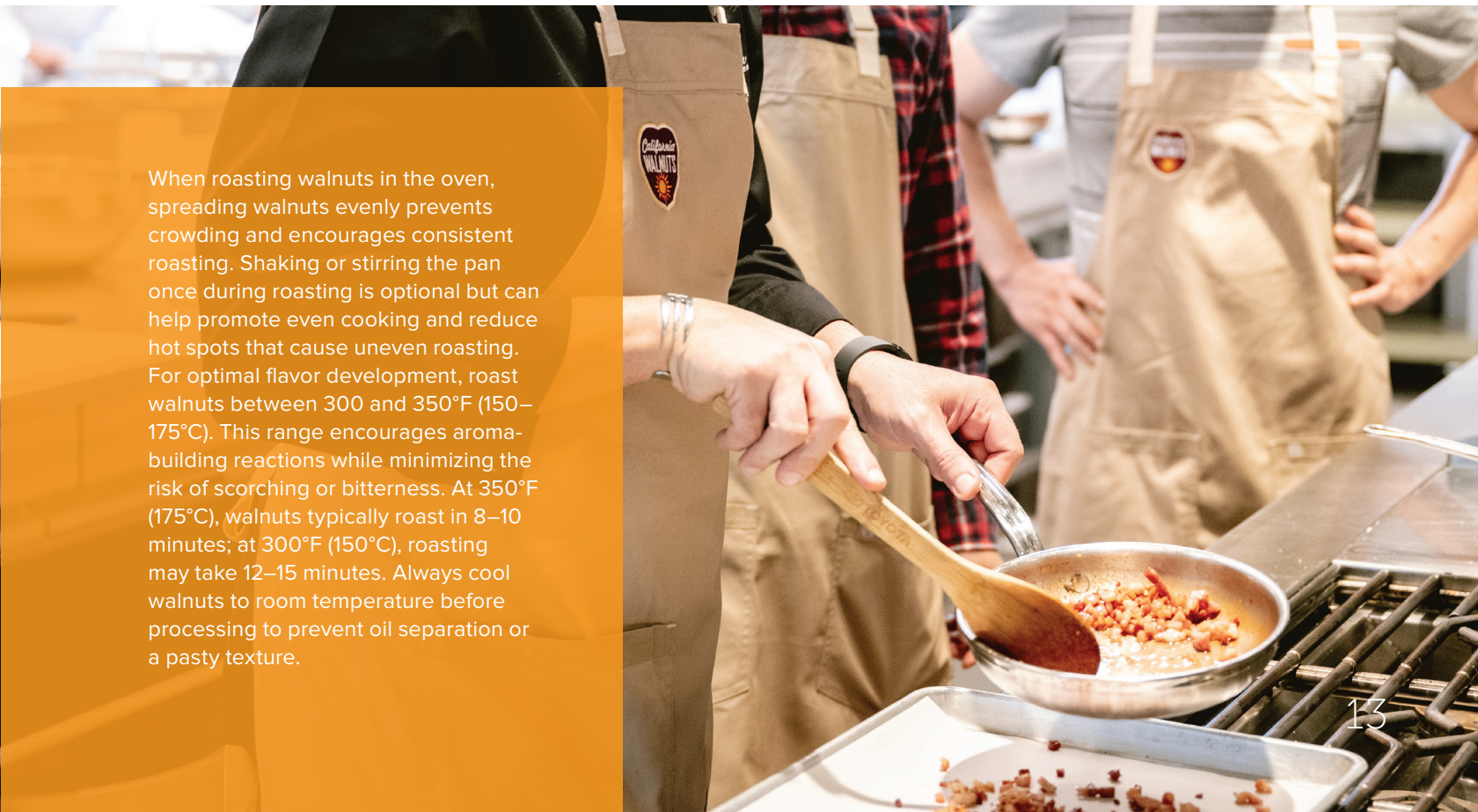
Controlled dry-heat methods like oven-roasting or pan-toasting intensify aroma and deepen flavor, while moist-heat techniques such as soaking, steaming, simmering, or sous vide soften texture and enhance flavor absorption. Frying adds richness and creates a crispy structure, while hydration techniques can reduce bitterness and improve color and blend ability.

These techniques are highly scalable and adaptable across various formats. A method refined in a restaurant kitchen can be applied in a test kitchen environment and then adjusted for manufacturing conditions, such as batch size, equipment limitations, and consistency needs. By understanding how walnuts respond to core techniques, culinary teams and product developers can make informed choices about format selection, processing order, and application strategies.

WALNUT ROASTING TECHNIQUE AND EQUIPMENT

Walnuts can be toasted in a pan or roasted in the oven, but oven roasting produces the most even flavor and color. Pan toasting develops occasional charred spots that add complexity, while deep-frying introduces fat and creates a very rich, intense walnut flavor. Walnuts may be roasted in a conventional, convection, or combi oven, provided the temperature is carefully controlled. Use a sheet pan or perforated pan to ensure even heat exposure. Roasting walnuts enhances aroma and deepens natural nut flavor. Roasted walnuts can be used as crumbs for garnishing, mixed into sauces or soups for texture, or processed into spreads, butters, or pastes.

Walnuts are done when the edges are lightly browned, the aroma is warm and toasted, and the interior shows a uniform golden color with a rich, balanced flavor when tasted.



When roasting walnuts in the oven, spreading walnuts evenly prevents crowding and encourages consistent roasting. Shaking or stirring the pan once during roasting is optional but can help promote even cooking and reduce hot spots that cause uneven roasting. For optimal flavor development, roast walnuts between 300 and 350°F (150–175°C). This range encourages aroma-building reactions while minimizing the risk of scorching or bitterness. At 350°F (175°C), walnuts typically roast in 8–10 minutes; at 300°F (150°C), roasting may take 12–15 minutes. Always cool walnuts to room temperature before processing to prevent oil separation or a pasty texture.

FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

SEASONED WALNUTS

Seasoned walnut toppings and snacks add flavor, texture, and visual appeal across menu and product applications. Walnuts may be used as-purchased for convenience and consistency or custom-seasoned to allow precise control of flavor and texture.

Pan seasoning suits small batches and test kitchens, while oven seasoning supports larger-scale production with even coating. Oils, fats, or binding agents help carry flavor and ensure seasoning adhesion, and frying delivers the richest flavor and crunch when seasoned immediately after cooking.

Seasoned walnuts function as modular components used whole, chopped, or crushed to add crunch and layered flavor to salads, bowls, desserts, beverages, and snacks, scaling easily from culinary use to commercial production.

Seasoning Techniques



Pan Seasoning



Oven Seasoning



Frying

CANDIED WALNUTS

Candied walnuts enhance both sweet and savory dishes, offering consistent flavor, texture, and visual appeal, with commercial versions valued for their convenience and uniform quality.

Dry caramel methods produce praline or brittle-style coatings, with baking soda creating a lighter, more porous crunch. Egg white or syrup coatings yield a matte finish with balanced sweetness, while syrup-soaked, deep-fried walnuts create a glossy, crisp coating typically found in a walnut shrimp dish.

Each technique offers distinct sweetness, texture, and appearance, allowing chefs and developers to choose the best style for their application.



Candied Walnut Techniques



Praline-Style



Baked & Sugared



Crisp & Glossy

WALNUTS AS A PLANT-BASED MEAT ALTERNATIVE

As a plant-based meat alternative, walnuts can be prepared using familiar cooking methods that scale easily from home kitchens to professional and large-scale productions. The basic process is consistent: chop walnuts, combine with aromatics, seasonings, and moisture, then cook gently until tender and flavorful.

Walnut meat may be cooked on the stovetop, in conventional, convection, or combi ovens, or using sous-vide methods. Stovetop cooking works well for small batches and rapid testing, while oven and combi ovens support larger batches with greater consistency and less hands-on labor. Sous vide provides the highest level of precision and repeatability for standardized production.

Once cooked, walnut meat functions like other crumbled proteins and can be reheated, further seasoned, and used in sauces, fillings, stir-fries, and layered dishes, making it adaptable from menu development through full-scale production.

Scan the QR code for walnut meat recipe inspiration.





WHAT IS WALNUT CREAM?

How to Make Walnut Cream

ONE
Blender

TWO
INGREDIENTS
Walnuts & Water

THREE
MINUTES
In a blender

THIN WALNUT CREAM

BY **WEIGHT** OR BY **VOLUME**

BY WEIGHT		BY VOLUME	
30% WALNUTS	**70%** WATER	**50%** WALNUTS	**50%** WATER

MEDIUM WALNUT CREAM

BY **WEIGHT** OR BY **VOLUME**

BY WEIGHT		BY VOLUME	
45% WALNUTS	**55%** WATER	**65%** WALNUTS	**35%** WATER

THICK WALNUT CREAM

BY **WEIGHT** OR BY **VOLUME**

BY WEIGHT		BY VOLUME	
50% WALNUTS	**50%** WATER	**70%** WALNUTS	**30%** WATER

How to Customize Walnut Cream

Sweet

Base

REPLACE WATER WITH

- FRUIT JUICE
- TEA & COFFEE
- COCONUT WATER

Seasonings

BLEND IN WHEN PREPARING

- SUGAR & SYRUPS
- HERBS & SPICES
- EXTRACTS & OILS

SWIRL / SPRINKLE ON AFTER CHILLING

- POWDERS
- SYRUPS
- SAUCES

Savory

Base

REPLACE WATER WITH

- STOCK
- BROTH
- SOUP

Seasonings

BLEND IN WHEN PREPARING

- FERMENTED SAUCES
- HERBS & SPICES
- OIL & VINEGARS

WHISK IN AFTER CHILLING

- CARAMELIZED ONIONS
- ROASTED GARLIC
- CHILI SAUCES

COMBINE DURING COOKING

- AROMATICS
- CHILI SAUCES
- SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS

A Smooth, Versatile Base.

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

This recipe base is ready for immediate use. For commercial use, a stabilizer is required. For questions email foodinnovation@walnuts.org.

Different **thicknesses.** Different **applications.**



THIN

REPLACEMENT FOR:

- HEAVY CREAM
- BARISTA CREAM
- COLD FOAM

- COOKING
  - SAUCES → BÉCHAMEL
  - PUREES → MASHED POTATOES
  - SOUPS → CREAM
- BAKING
  - SAUCES → PUDDINGS → CRÈME ANGLAISE
  - BATTERS / DOUGHS → QUICK BREADS → PANCAKES / WAFFLES
- BEVERAGE
  - BASE → EGGNOG → HORCHATA → LATTE
  - TOPPING → FOAM → CREAMER



MEDIUM

REPLACEMENT FOR:

- WHIPPED CREAM
- SOUR CREAM
- MAYONNAISE

- COOKING
  - SAUCES → SALAD DRESSINGS
  - PUREES → MASHED POTATOES
  - SOUPS → CREAMY SOUPS
  - SPREADS
- BAKING
  - BATTERS / DOUGHS → SCONES / BISCUITS
  - WHIPPED TOPPINGS → TART FILLINGS
  - FROZEN DESSERTS → ICE CREAMS → POPSICLES / SHERBETS
- BEVERAGE → SMOOTHIES → BLENDED ICED COFFEES



THICK

REPLACEMENT FOR:

- CREAM CHEESE
- GREEK YOGURT
- HUMMUS

- COOKING
  - SAUCES → FINISHING CREAM
  - PUREES → MASHED POTATOES
  - SOUPS → CREAM / CHOWDER
  - DIPS
- BAKING
  - BATTERS → CHEESECAKE
  - FILLINGS → PARFAIT / TRIFLE
  - TOPPINGS → CAKE FROSTING → ICING
  - FROZEN DESSERTS → ICE CREAM → GELATO
- BEVERAGE → SMOOTHIES → MILKSHAKES

For recipe inspiration and more information, visit

walnuts.org/walnut-cream

RECIPE INSPIRATION



Walnut Ranch Dressing

Dairy-free Walnut Ranch Dressing delivers the familiar tangy, herb-forward flavor operators expect. Powered by California walnuts for natural richness and body, the natural oil from the walnuts create a smooth, stable emulsion and contribute to a plant-based diet or menu, making this dressing suitable for salads, bowls, wraps, and dipping applications across foodservice and retail.

Creamy Walnut Cold Foam

California Walnut Cold Foam is a creamy, light, plant-based topping that delivers a naturally rich flavor and smooth texture, offering a dairy-free alternative to traditional cold foams. Use as a dessert topping or layer, as well as a garnish for soups.



Dairy-Free Walnut Herb Dip

California walnuts are blended into a smooth, stable base that carries fresh herbs and aromatics with ease. The result works as a dip for vegetables and chips, a spread for wraps and sandwiches, or a sauce component for appetizers and main courses.



Walnut Cinnamon Cream French Toast with Vanilla-Walnut Cream and Walnut Streusel

Walnut Cinnamon Cream French Toast is a rich, custardy, and dairy-free twist on the brunch classic, made with thin California walnut cream for a velvety texture and nutty depth of flavor. This recipe is perfect for restaurant brunch menus, hotel breakfast programs, or an elevated weekend treat at home.



Creamy Walnut and Tomato Soup

Creamy California Walnut Tomato Soup reimagines a familiar comfort classic. Slow-simmering tomatoes and aromatics are blended until smooth, then finished with fresh basil and a swirl of dairy-free walnut cream for a balanced soup that feels both familiar and modern. California walnuts add subtle sweetness, savory complexity, and a naturally creamy texture, making this recipe well-suited for foodservice menus, retail inspiration, and home kitchens seeking a plant-forward, flavor-driven option.

Walnut Meat Empanadas with Cilantro Lime Sauce

A vegetarian empanada features a seasoned walnut and mushroom filling that delivers a savory, chorizo-like depth while remaining completely plant-forward. It pairs with a tangy walnut cream cilantro sauce for balance and freshness.

Walnut Meatless Meatballs

California Walnut Meatless Meatballs present a plant-forward twist on a classic Italian comfort food, providing a satisfying texture and rich flavor without using animal protein.



Korean styled: Replace tomato paste, roasted red peppers, Italian parsley, thyme and oregano and replace with sesame oil, gochujang red chili paste.

Mexican inspired: Replace tomato paste, roasted red peppers, Italian parsley, thyme and oregano and replace with black beans, smoked paprika, Ancho chili powder, chipotle, ground cumin.

Indian spiced: Replace tomato paste, roasted red peppers, Italian parsley, thyme and oregano and replace with chickpeas, lentils, curry powder, paprika, turmeric, garlic powder, cumin, ginger and garam masala.

Walnut Panko Crusted Halibut with Arugula Pesto and Herbed Tomatoes

Flaky halibut fillets are topped with a golden California walnut panko crust that adds richness, texture, and subtle nuttiness, then baked until just tender. The fish sits over a peppery walnut arugula pesto that provides freshness, color, and savory depth to the plate. Together, the walnut crust, vibrant pesto, and fresh tomatoes create a refined yet approachable seafood dish suitable for foodservice, retail, or home kitchen.





Walnut-Bacon Baklava with Vanilla Orange Blossom Syrup

This savory-sweet twist on a classic baklava layers crispy bacon, coarsely chopped California walnuts, and plump raisins between delicate buttery phyllo sheets. Ideal for a bold dessert or indulgent snack, this baklava offers a delicious fusion of textures and flavors.



Connect with California Walnuts to access research, trends, insights, technical expertise, and commercialization resources designed to help bring new menu ideas to life. Our team is here to help foodservice operators and food manufactures create innovative products and menu solutions that satisfy consumer demand, drive differentiation and long-term business growth.

For inquiries regarding foodservice please email **foodservice@walnuts.org**, and for food manufacturing please email **foodinnovation@walnuts.org**.

California WALNUTS

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