

Topic Page: [Almond](#)

Definition: **almond** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Tree related to the peach and apricot. Dessert almonds, which can be eaten whole, are the kernels of the fruit of the sweet variety *Prunus amygdalus dulcis*, which is also used to produce a low-cholesterol cooking oil. Oil of bitter almonds, from the variety *P. amygdalus amara*, is used in flavouring. Bitter almonds contain hydrocyanic acid, which is poisonous and must be extracted before the oil can be processed. Almond oil is also used for cosmetics, perfumes, and fine lubricants. (*Prunus amygdalus*, family Rosaceae.)

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Almonds

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almond trees

Summary Article: **almond** from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*



Image from: [Bitter and sweet almonds are related to stone... in Philip's Encyclopedia](#)

name for a small tree (*Prunus amygdalus*) of the family Rosaceae (rose family) and for the nutlike, edible seed of its drupe fruit. The “nuts” of sweet-almond varieties are eaten raw or roasted and are pressed to obtain almond oil. Bitter-almond varieties also yield oil, from which the poisonous prussic acid is removed in the extraction process. Almond oil is used for flavoring, in soaps and cosmetics, and medicinally as a demulcent. The tree, native to central Asia and perhaps the Mediterranean, is now cultivated principally in the Middle East, Italy, Spain, Greece, and (chiefly the sweet varieties) California, which now produces over 70% of the world crop. It closely resembles the peach, of which it may be an ancestor, except that the fruit is fleshless. The flowering almonds (e.g., *P. triloba*) are pink- to white-blossomed shrubs also native to central Asia; like the similar and closely related pink-blossomed almond, they are widely cultivated as ornamentals. Several Asian types are known as myrobalan, a name applied also to the cherry plum, with which flowering almonds are sometimes hybridized. The beauty of the almond in bud, blossom, and fruit gave motif to sacred and ornamental carving. In the Middle East the tree breaks into sudden bloom in January, and in some of the region it has come to symbolize beauty and revival. The rod of Aaron in the Bible (see Aaron's-rod) bore almonds. Almonds are classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, order Rosales, family Rosaceae.



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Almond. (2017). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/almond/0>

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