



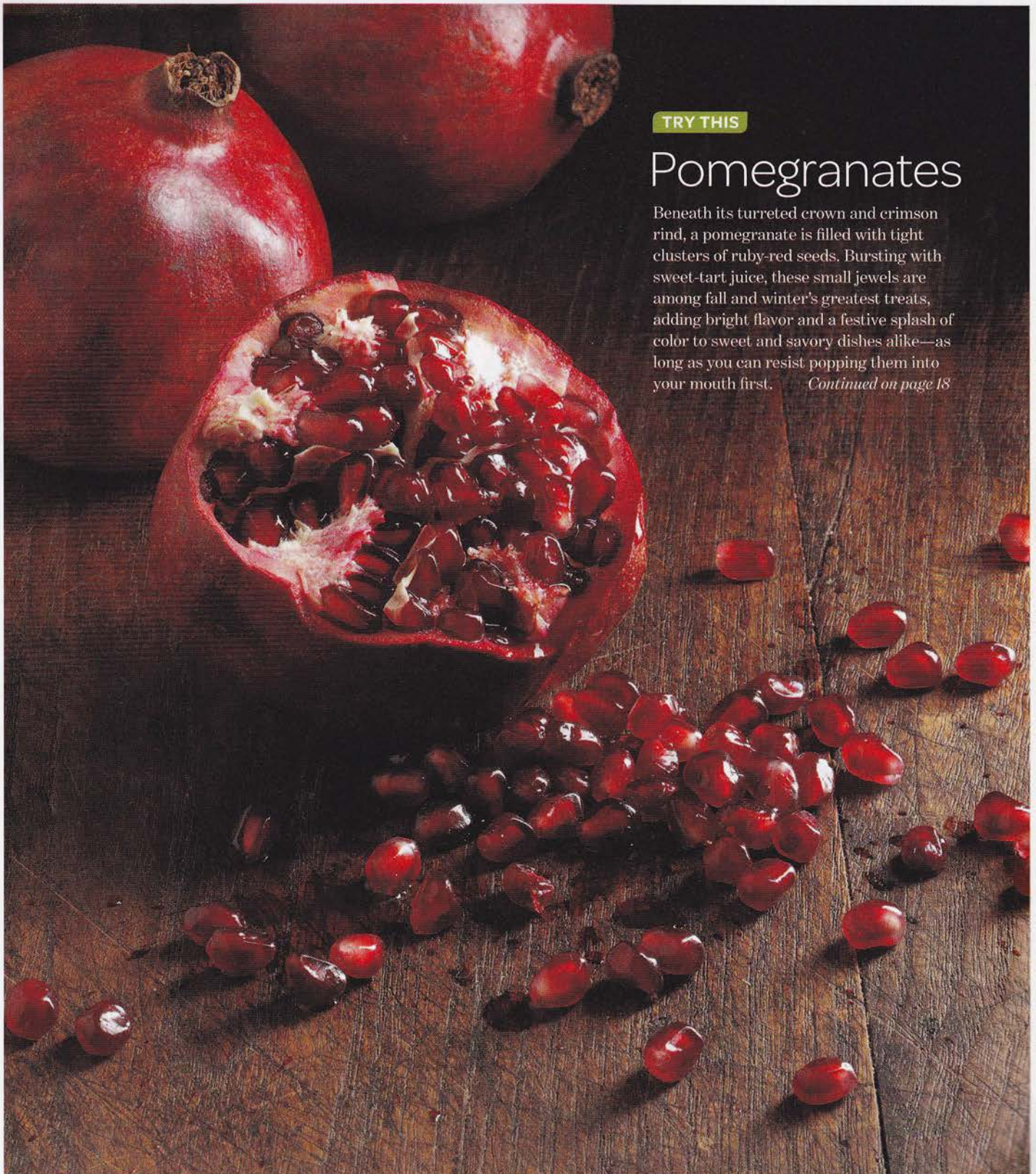
MARKETPLACE

Shop Smarter, Eat Better

TRY THIS

Pomegranates

Beneath its turreted crown and crimson rind, a pomegranate is filled with tight clusters of ruby-red seeds. Bursting with sweet-tart juice, these small jewels are among fall and winter's greatest treats, adding bright flavor and a festive splash of color to sweet and savory dishes alike—as long as you can resist popping them into your mouth first. *Continued on page 18*



TRY THIS POMEGRANATES

Wonderful is most common

Believed to have originated in Persia (today's Iran), pomegranates grow on small, shrubby trees in hot, dry regions. Botanically known as *Punica granatum*, or "apple with many seeds," each fruit contains hundreds of arils (the proper term for the juicy flesh that encases the actual seeds). Pomegranates have long been a kitchen staple in India, Iran, and Turkey; it's only in recent years that they've become popular in the United States for their flavor and antioxidant powers.

Varieties range in color from brick red to yellow and in size from 3 to 5 inches in diameter. The U.S. market is dominated by the variety Wonderful. Primarily grown in California and available October through January, Wonderfuls are about the size of a grapefruit and have a purple-red rind.

Pomegranates keep for months

Once picked, pomegranates stop ripening. Look for those with firm, smooth, fresh-looking rinds and no soft spots. They should be uniform in color and feel heavy with juice. Minor surface blemishes are fine.

Stored at room temperature, whole pomegranates will keep for several days. In a plastic bag in the refrigerator, they'll last for up to three months. Refrigerate loose seeds in a zip-top bag for up to three days, or freeze them for up to six months.

Pair with sweet or savory foods

Equal parts tart and sweet, pomegranate seeds can be sprinkled over yogurt or oatmeal, tossed into salads, added to pancake or muffin batter, muddled and stirred into lemonade or sparkling wine, or mixed into salsas, relishes, or chutneys. They make a great addition to chocolate (see the recipe at right). Of course, they're delicious eaten out of hand, too.

The juice is equally versatile. Buy it in the supermarket produce section or make your own: Blend the seeds until liquefied, then strain. Try it in citrusy vinaigrettes, as a poaching liquid for pears, or in glazes or pan sauces for chicken, duck, or pork. Use it to make sorbet or granitas. Boil it down with sugar until syrupy and add to cocktails, such as planter's punch.

Pomegranate pairs well with citrus, warming spices, nuts, rich meats such as lamb, duck, and pork, and cheeses like feta, goat, and Brie—there are as many possibilities as there are seeds in a pomegranate.

—Melissa Denchak, contributing editor



**chocolate-
pomegranate-
ginger bark**

Impressive-looking yet quick and simple to make, this confection makes a perfect holiday or hostess gift. Serves 6

- 10 oz. bittersweet chocolate (60% cacao), broken into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup fresh pomegranate seeds (from 1 large pomegranate)
- 1½ Tbs. minced candied ginger
- ¼ tsp. fine sea salt

Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or waxed paper. Put the chocolate in a wide, shallow microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high until it just starts to melt, about 1 minute. Stir with a spatula until the chocolate is completely melted and smooth, heating in additional 15-second increments, if necessary.

Gently stir half of the pomegranate seeds, the ginger (break up any clumps with your fingers), and the salt into the chocolate. Scrape the chocolate mixture onto the baking sheet and spread it into an 8x10-inch rectangle. Sprinkle the remaining pomegranate seeds evenly over the top, pressing them into the chocolate.

Refrigerate until fully set, about 30 minutes. Break the bark into chunks with your hands (be careful not to crush the seeds), and serve. The bark will keep, refrigerated, for up to 5 days

—M. D.

Use water to seed a pomegranate

If you try to just cut open the fruit and scoop out the seeds, you'll stain your fingers and clothes. Instead, begin by removing the pomegranate's crown and lightly scoring its rind into quarters from end to end. Soak the fruit in a bowl of cool water for five minutes; then break the still-submerged fruit into sections with your fingers and gently remove the seeds. Discard the bitter rind, pith, and bits of membrane (which will float to the top) and then drain the seeds in a sieve. A medium, 9-oz. pomegranate yields about ¾ cup seeds.