

## In A Nut Shell

Nuts are good for more than adding flavor to your favorite desserts. From pecans and walnuts to Brazil nuts and macadamias, these tasty treats supply potassium, magnesium, calcium, fiber, protein, vitamin E, and omega-3 fatty acids to the body.

Nuts are especially good for the brain helping it to stay fluid and flexible. Nuts even look like a human brain. Note how the walnut has two halves with a shape that mimics the grooves and indentions of the brain. This is nature's clue that nuts are brain food!

Eating nuts on a regular basis can improve brain function by raising melatonin levels and cognitive function. Eating nuts can boost the spirit, relieve depression, and help insomniacs get a good night's sleep. Nuts may even help reduce the severity of dementia and other age related conditions when eaten regularly throughout life.

Consuming nuts can help lower cholesterol and improve heart health when added to a balanced diet. Nuts contain compounds that reduce the chance of blood clots



and help clean the blood vessels. Forget the pecan pie and chocolate turtles. Try adding nuts to salads and other savory dishes like pesto. Nuts are also good by the hand full.

For heart and brain health, pesto is a prime example of good eating. Just chop 2 cups of basil (or baby spinach), add a half cup of finely chopped nuts, 2 garlic cloves (minced), some olive oil, black pepper, and salt to taste. Right before serving, add some freshly grated parmesan cheese. Serve fresh pesto with crackers, on grilled chicken, or on pasta. Enjoy!

\*Nuts should smell fresh and nutty. If rancid, they will have an off scent and should not be eaten. Never consume rancid nuts or oils.

Written by Janice Boling

*Janice Boling of Payne Mountain Farms & Store sells hand crafted and wild crafted products for the body, mind, spirit, home, and garden - all produced on her small farm in the Georgia Mountains. Celebrating the Appalachians, where sustainable farming is a way of life, they appreciate their customers and promise to provide the best service, the highest quality merchandise, a secure shopping experience, and fair prices.*

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## Woodcarving a Natural Talent

The fascinating art of woodcarving has become perfected by Brian Ledford, who has a reputation as a woodcarving master. It began when he simply picked up a piece of wood and carved something with a pocket knife. The talent was natural, the enjoyment rewarding and seeing a finished product was satisfying.

"I never took no schooling. I like taking a square piece of wood and making what I see." Sometimes he will make numerous pieces and other designs he never duplicates.

"I love pocket knives," said Brian. "I always collected pocket knives and always liked wood so that got me to whittling and carving."

Most of the work is by freehand, occasionally sketching. Most of the different colors in the piece are different types of wood. "When I first started that was the only way I got different colors, was using different kinds of wood. Now I paint some things."

Brian would take shafts off of used golf clubs to make gouges. "The metal in the shafts makes some of the best tools there is. I was sitting here one day and looking at one of the golf club heads where I cut it off and it looked like a duck's body." Brian carved a duck



Brian in his workshop nc



Fish caught on a hook



Creating a character

head and attached it to the club head for a duck.

Brian sets up at the Scottish Festival, Indian Summer Festival, Sorghum Festival and others. "When I started demonstrating, when I was sitting there with nothing but a pocket knife and a couple of hand tools, that really caught their interest then," said Brian. They watched him take just a pocket knife

and carve with no power tools or anything electrical.

Brian gives scores of carved items, like Christmas ornaments, to students. He carved cowboy boots that his children's classmates turned into key chains. He has those ready, but will carve one while students watch. "That fascinates them to see a piece of wood turn into that and then they get one to take home."

Of everything he has ever made, the best things to come out of it are friends he has made. "I have made a world of friends though the wood carving," said Brian. "I would not trade that for nothing. Meeting different people, talking to people, the friends is worth more than anything I will ever get out of the carving. I have friends I will have from now on because of the carving."

Brian enjoys teaching classes and tells them they have the ability to do it. "If you make it close, you have done pretty good."

Brian spends just about every day carving about four hours. "I always enjoy it and never get frustrated with it."

**Brian Ledford**  
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