Choose firm pears with no soft spots and let the pears ripen at home.

Check near the stem daily for ripeness; when the pear yields to gentle pressure, it is ready.

If desired, pears can be stored in a paper bag at room temperature to shorten ripening time.

Once ripe, the pear can be stored in the refrigerator until eaten.

Pears make a great snack right off the counter, but can also be used much like apples.

Sliced pears are often used to liven up salads, as a side to sandwiches and as a topping on cereals.

Pears are great baked into cobblers, but also provide great flavor in fruit salsas.

Try sandwhiching the fruit slices between graham crackers and peanut butter.

They are tasty glazed, sautéed, poached, and pickled, too.

• Most widely grown of all pears
• Ripens from bright green to a yellow color

• Fruit is mild-sweet, great for all uses
• Ripens to creamy green, sometimes with red shades

• Large with long neck, great for all uses
• Ripens to greenish yellow with cinnamon-colored tint
Pear & Pecan Bran Muffins
by Old Soul Café Chef Shonna Haugen

Chef Shonna Haugen has been in the culinary industry for 20 years. She recently opened Old Soul Café and Catering so she could provide fresh, healthy and innovative options for her guests. Chef Shonna believes in creating unique dishes with an emphasis on nutrition while using the freshest ingredients possible. She also provides gluten free, vegan and vegetarian options at her café.

**Ingredients (opt. means optional)**
- 1 1/2 cups wheat bran
- 1 3/4 cups almond milk
  (or your favorite milk)
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 ea egg
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract (opt.)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 ea pear, skin on and diced
- 1 ea pear, skin off and mashed
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted pecans
- 1/2 tsp ginger (opt.)
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon (opt.)

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 375 degrees and grease muffin tin with vegetable oil. Mix the wheat bran with the milk and let sit 10 minutes to fully absorb. Beat the oil, egg, sugar and vanilla and then add to bran mixture. Mix the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt together and then add to the rest of the ingredients and fully incorporate. Fill the muffin cups about 3/4 the way full and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until you can insert a toothpick into the center and it comes out clean.

**Did you know?**
Pear skins provide as much as half of the total fiber and up to four times as many cancer-fighting antioxidants as the flesh.

**Recipe yields 12 muffins**