

(picture courtesy of Taste of Pace)

I love traveling. Especially when it involves foodie activity. And this year has been ultra busy doing just that!

*At the end of October, I was on board yet another flight to engage in more fantastic culinary adventures. Nothing like you'd ever imagine, but this was a personal invitation by the world's largest purveyor of pomegranates, **POM Wonderful**, to visit their orchards and fresh fruit and juice processing plants to learn about their business practice, their fresh produce & juice, their other products, and why that ruby red fruit is worth the \$4 you pay at certain markets.*

POM Wonderful, with the generous hosting by Andrea and Jeff, strategically and beautifully executed a delicious and very educational Blogger Harvest Tour, where 15 VIP bloggers spent 3 days doing all things pomegranate. The ruby red fruit, as mentioned in my [pom & grand marnier flan post](#), is in full harvest right now through January. To celebrate their arrival, November is dedicated as National Pomegranate Month, and accordingly I'll indulge you in a variety of stats, recipes and contests sponsored by company itself.

The wonderful bloggers included:

[Roni ? GreenLiteBites](#) [Coco \(Qian\) ? Balance Joy and Delicias](#) [Gina ? Fitnessista](#) [Kristy - This Wicked Noodle](#) [Sagan - Living Healthy in the Real World](#) [Pace ? Taste of Pace](#) [Caitlin - Healthy Tipping Point](#) [Janel ? Dine Dish Delish](#) [Shirley ? Gluten Free Easily](#) [Susan ? Sticky Gooey Creamy Chewy](#) [Emily ? Visions of Sugarplum](#) [Eric ? Eric Rivera Cooks](#) and [Heather ? Heather Eat Almond Butter](#) .

(photo taken by Jeff)

This post is 1 of a 3 part series where I'll cover not only the fun and exhilarating parts of the trip, but a history and health lesson on pomegranates and how we can all benefit from eating the powerful fruit, which originally cultivated in Iran and the Himalayas of Northern India.

The trip started with receiving a generous Swag bag filled with organic loose leaf tea, POMx bars, POM coffee, an organic notebook, a cute, fitted tee, kitchen mittens stuffed with recipe cards, all packed in a clear lunchbox type container. Great right? I unpack, get all giddy about meeting 14 other bloggers, some of which I had recognized previously, and then I realize my camera is missing. Just gone.

This only happens to me.

So I call Jeff, the director of online marketing, whom kindly offers to lend me his horse-power camera. Not only does this super gentle man have his game ON at the company, but he's a fashion week photographer. I felt like a complete idiot and incompetent wannabe photog, accepting to use his cam, but I had no choice. Most of the pictures in the next post are ones I took from his awesome camera, though I let him "borrow" it a few times for some other shots. (*shots in this post were taken by other bloggers and are credited, accordingly*)

So kind of me.

After a quick meet and greet in the hotel lobby, initiated by Andrea, the other director of online marketing (I quickly noticed I'm on the only brown girl among the group which always causes me to wonder where our place is in the mainstream market?but that's another post for another day), we head off to dinner at BJ's, a forgettable restaurant.

(picture courtesy of Caitlin of Carrots N Cake)

Mind you, we're in Fresno, not a sexy place, so I don't think any of us were expecting fine wine and *crème freche* desserts. Our real treats were forthcoming. I did however, have some pretty good fish tacos, which I devoured in less than 10 minutes (having just returned from 5 day in Cabo, Mexico, 3 days before where I did NOT eat street tacos, it was ironic to be eating them in Fresno).

And, desserts were incredibly indulging, with options ranging from apple crisp to ganache torts and sorbets. I passed on all those because I was looking forward to tearing up POMx bars when I got back to my room.

The agenda Tuesday morning is what has changed my opinion and eating habits of pomegranates. Media tours, which I do a lot, can be very draining. Up at 6:30-7 am. Super fast breakfast and on the bus/van by 8. Way too early for me and my at-home lifestyle. But knowing that I was about to board a private charter plane (you know the ones Beyoncé, Bono and Lady Gaga travel in?) and do a fly-over of their 18 thousand acres of pomegranate orchards, had me geeked and feeling really lucky to be considered a VIP blogger.

A 2-hour drive to the orchards, located in Lost Hills, California, fostered "getting to know you" conversations, with half of us in each van. It was pretty interesting learning how we each got involved in blogging and what personally inspired our journey's as food bloggers.

Finally, we get to our destination. Holy crap! Massive industrial farm land with open fields of nothing. Well, nothing BUT pomegranate bushes, and almond trees! We actually arrive at Paramount Farms,

owners of Pom Wonderful. They also grow almond and pistachio trees, which sell under two different sister companies. I had some almonds and they were the best you could snatch from a tree.

Pistachios are out of season.

(picture above and below courtesy of Pace from Taste of Pace)

THE SET: A long private runway, right smack in the middle of orchards. In anticipation of the 2 charter planes arriving, we stand in the middle of the field and still try to process what's about to happen. Pace and I, whom I quickly hit it off with (young, sassy chef based in LA, with cool clients and an incredible come-back health story), get on our Blackberry's to compare pictures we had just taken.

(picture taken by Jeff)

As soon as our planes arrive, we go for the photo-op. Jeff snapped away in true fashion photography form and on-flight we were! The Barronnes was smaller, which I boarded first and sat in the co-pilot's chair, heads and all. 1,500 feet up in the air and I had a fantastic vantage point of the fields that yield the fruit so popularly consumed. I then boarded the 2nd plane, The King, much more my stilo and enjoyed that view from the cabin and not the front end.

Here's some video footage from the inspiring fly-over! I hope you enjoy it as much as I did, cuz I swear after 10 hours editing this 10 min. vid, I will start chucking pomegranates if you don't like it!

(note: it is 10:46 so I suggest letting it download all the way by hitting pause & then playing it. I really think you'll enjoy it!)

[Get the Flash Player](#) to see the wordTube Media Player.

(field pictures above courtesy of Emily of Visions of Sugar Plum)

Talk about a sexy ass ride. 6 supple leather seats, larger than wack American Airlines or Airtran's 1st class can offer, and of course, a fine looking captain.

(both pictures above taken by the amazing Jeff)

After landing on the private runway and taking more pictures, we were whisked away to the orchards!

Now, that's where it's at!

Stay tuned for the next installment of the POM Wonderful visit where I'll take you inside the orchards and tell you all about the harvest, how pomegranates are chosen from the bushes, and touch on the nutritional and incredible health values of the ruby red fruit.

OH A GIVE AWAY!!! YES ANOTHER POMEGRANATE GIVE-AWAY!!

ONE WINNER WILL WIN A SIGNED BOOK BY LYNDA RESNICK, FOUNDER AND OWNER OF ALL THIS GREATNESS. THE BOOK, "RUBIES IN THE ORCHARD," IS HER STORY.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LEAVE A COMMENT! YOU HAVE UNTIL **DEC. 12th! 21st!** GO! Yes, I've extended it since there were only 11 entries! Pom bloggers do not qualify as they too received one!

*book is being provided directly by and courtesy of POM Wonderful.

UPDATE 12/11/09:

WINNERS OF FRESH POM FRUIT & POM X BARS IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL POMEGRANATE MONTH POM BRIOCHE FRENCH TOAST BLOG POST!!

Jen, my friend from Twitter!!! Congrats, girlie!! You'll get delicious dark chocolate and pom seed bars!! And the 2nd winner is Ranae, a 1st time commentator! Thanks for visiting and hope you'll come back! You'll get some super ruby red fresh pomegranates! Congrats to you two ladies!