



## Khajur Dates



Date production in the world is only confined to a small number of countries, most of them being the Arab countries. However, the date industry in the Arab world is not yet fully developed and concerted efforts are still needed to fully utilize the tremendous potential of date substances as ingredients in processed foods for export and the local market. Date pectin, dietary fibre and syrup are some of the date substances which can find a plethora of applications as a thickener or gelling agent in processed foods, i.e., confectionery products, jams, table jellies, soft cheeses, yoghurts, etc. But date products such as these should be developed on a sound technological basis which requires adequate characterisation of the chemical composition and textural properties of dates. The College of Agriculture, SQU, has implemented a thorough study on the structure-function relationships of date ingredients that yielded, for the first time, the so-called 'state diagram' of the fruit. The article elaborates on the study and the benefits it could bring to the dates industry and the market for date-product.

To rationalise the softening of the fruit, we examined the chemical nature of the pectin polysaccharide, which constitutes the main gelling agent of date materials. Pectin is a galacturonic acid whose esterified form with methyl groups can form a gel network assisted by the presence of high levels of sugar. These conditions, of course, are met in dates, which contain up to 70% unrefined sugars. The methyl ester content of pectin was determined by standard chemical analysis and results are reproduced in Figure 1. A definite decrease in the degree of methyl esterification (DME) was observed as the dates matured.

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Note :- Rate of the products Mention in the Website will be verified by day to day fluctuation in the Indian Agro Market Actual Rate of the Products will be provide at the time of final Confirmation of Order

## Date Palm Cultivation in Oman

The importance of dates cultivation in Oman can not be underestimated. Across the country almost seventy five percent of the area allocated to tree crops is monopolized by the date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera*.

Current estimates of the number of trees in the country approach seven million with the maximum fruit yield reaching 40 kg per palm. To date Khalas remains the cultivar of the highest quality but experimental introduction of new cultivars along with easier production practices are poised to increase the extent of large scale farming in the country. However, the size of cultivated areas is limited by the availability of water and traditional small-scale farms are irrigated by falaj water. Fertilization takes place manually by placing branches cut from the male tree among the sprays of the female tree. This can be an exhausting process and, alternatively, pollen can be mixed with wheat flour and frozen until the required time of fertilization, which is administered by a hand held spray. Ripe dates are collected by the farmer using a long rope along the tree, which allows him to climb to the top. Today Omani standards are in place in relation to handling following harvesting, pressing and packaging of the fruit. Collection centers act as intermediaries between the farmers in the production areas and processing plants. Both units are adequately equipped with cold and dry stores and transportation facilities. Furthermore, the government has intensified efforts to educate growers on the code of practice for improved quality control and distribution procedures which should reduce the cases of blemished dates encountered during post-harvest.



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