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The pomegranate is an extraordinary fruit, steeped in history: the number of seeds (roughly 613) found in a single fruit was said by ancient scholars to correspond to the 613 commands of the Hebrew Torah. Renowned herbalist James Duke, a former ecologist with the USDA, has published (in the April, 2008 issue of *Alternative & Complementary Therapies*) an exhaustive review of the scientific literature on the pomegranate. His conclusion: it is "one of the most promising of health foods" with "a dozen known anti-inflammatory phytochemicals and some three dozen antioxidants." Duke found studies that suggest pomegranate fruit and/or juice may help prevent or alleviate:

1. Heart disease and atherosclerosis
2. High cholesterol
3. Prostate cancer
4. Alzheimer's disease

If you have access to inexpensive pomegranates (as many in the southern U.S. do as the trees grow prolifically with little tending), by all means indulge. And if you can't, remember that deep-colored fruits such as cherries, blueberries, raspberries and deep-colored vegetables all offer similar benefits. Enjoy!

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