

Prunes, Dates, Raisins-Teaching Points

Grades 3-4

Reasons to Eat Dried Fruit

- ❖ One serving of dried fruit is ¼ cup.
- ❖ When you eat dried fruit you are also getting:
 - Vitamin C- helps fight off sickness.
 - Vitamin A- helps us see in the dark
 - B vitamins work together to help us grow the way we should
 - Fiber – moves food through our bodies
 - Iron – helps prevent you from being tired
 - Calcium – for strong bones



Just the Facts

- ❖ The dried fruits we will be talking about are dates, figs, plums and raisins.
- ❖ Dates grow on palm trees.
- ❖ There are 250,000 date palm trees in the United States. In comparison, Iraq (slightly larger than California) has nearly 22 million date palm trees!!
- ❖ We grow date palms in California.
- ❖ The fig is actually an in-side-out flower while the seeds are called drupes. The seeds or drupes are the real fruit.

Dried Fruit History

- ❖ In 1876, an immigrant from Scotland whose name was William Thompson developed a seedless grape. It is called today a Thompson Seedless. They are grown right in the central San Joaquin Valley where we live. Raisins are made out of Thompson Seedless grapes.
- ❖ People have been eating raisins as long ago as 1490 B.C.E.

Eat Your Colors

| Color Group | Health Benefits | Examples |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Red | Help our heart stay healthy Help us remember | dried apples dried cranberries red currants |
| Yellow/Orange | Help our heart stay healthy Help our eyes to see in the dark Help fight sickness | golden raisins dried apricots |
| White/Tan/Brown | Help our heart stay healthy | dates, dried figs |
| Green | Help our eyes to see Help make strong bones and teeth | dried kiwi dried green apples |
| Blue/Purple | Help us to remember | dried plums raisins Zante currants dried blueberries |



- ❖ Fruits and vegetables come in a rainbow of colors. Eat lots of colorful fruits and vegetables every day – red, yellow/orange, white, green, and blue/purple.

Home Grown Facts

- ❖ Tulare County is one of the top dried plum producing counties in California.
- ❖ In the United States, almost all raisins are produced in California's Central Valley (mostly in Fresno County).
- ❖ We produce half of the world's supply of raisins.

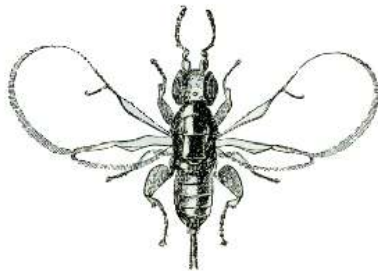
How Do Fruits Dry?

- ❖ Fruits have water inside them. Fruits become dry when they lose water inside them. when their moisture content drops below 20 percent.
- ❖ Fruit can dry from hanging on the tree or vine.
- ❖ Farmers can make fruit dry too with machines.
- ❖ Farmers in California discovered on accident how to make raisins out of grapes.
- ❖ The weather turned very hot and the grapes lost their water and became dry. The dry, wrinkly grapes tasted good. This gave the farmers an idea.
- ❖ California plums are dried by machines that lower the water inside. Not all plums can be dried. The California plum variety is very special.

Student Sleuths

- ❖ Dates, dried plums, figs and raisins are all sources of dietary fiber. Dietary fiber is the portion of plants we eat that our bodies can't digest and helps move food through our bodies.
- ❖ Up until the late 1800s, Calimyrna growers in California were puzzled as to why their trees would not set fruit. It was finally discovered that they needed a tiny wasp with no stinger called a **Blastophaga psenes**. This wasp lives inside the fruits of wild figs. The tiny wasps are small enough to pass through the "eye" of a sewing needle. These wild figs containing the wasp are now grown in California, and each summer they are placed in the little brown bags in Calimyrna orchards. This is very important to the Calimyrna growers.

Blastophaga psenes



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