

Just the Facts

Raisins

Serving Size: ¼ cup (40g)

Calories 130 Calories from Fat 0

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 29g	
Protein 1g	

Vitamin A <2% Calcium 2%
Vitamin C <2% Iron 6%

Source: www.calraisins.org

Dates

Serving Size: ¼ cup (40g)

Calories 120 Calories from Fat 0

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 3g	14%
Sugars 29g	
Protein 1g	

Vitamin A 0% Calcium 2%
Vitamin C 0% Iron 2%

Source: www.datesaregreat.com

Dried Figs

Serving Size: ¼ cup (40g)

Calories 113 Calories from Fat 2

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 20g	
Protein 1g	

Vitamin A <2% Calcium 6%
Vitamin C <2% Iron 6%

Source: www.californiafigs.com

Dried Plums

Serving Size: ¼ cup (40g)

Calories 110 Calories from Fat 0

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	10%
Sugars 13g	
Protein 1g	

Vitamin A 5% Calcium 2%
Vitamin C 4% Iron 3%

Source: www.californiadriedplums.org

There are about 250,000 date palm trees in the United States, most of which are on 5,000 acres in the Coachella Valley. In comparison, Iraq — which is only slightly larger in size than California — has nearly 22 million date palm trees.

The fig is actually an inverted flower while the seeds are the drupes, or real fruit.

The fiber and sorbitol found in dried plums can help retain moisture in leaner cuts of red meat and poultry. On average, Americans consume about two pounds of raisins per year, slightly ahead of fresh grape consumption.

For more facts, visit:
www.harvestofthemonth.com



Photograph by Lisa Cambi.

Cafeteria Connections

- Fill four transparent containers of the same size with a different dried fruit (e.g., dates, figs, plums and raisins).
- Have students estimate the number of dried fruit pieces and number of cups in each container.
- Promote the contest in classrooms and provide a place for entries.
- Obtain or make prizes and set a contest end date.
- Award classroom(s) with the most correct guesses with the jars of dried fruits or make trail mix.

How Much Do I Need?

Recommended Daily Amounts of Fruits and Vegetables*

Kids, Ages 5-12	Teens, Ages 13-18	Adults, 19+
2½ - 5 cups per day	3½ - 6½ cups per day	3½ - 6½ cups per day

*Ranges take into account three activity levels: sedentary, moderately active and active. For example, active individuals should aim to eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.

Dried Fruit History

- Athenians, including Plato, referred to themselves as “philosykos,” which translates to “friend of the fig.”
- After his failed gold mining venture, Frenchman Louis Pellier introduced Californians to dried plums at his Santa Clara Valley nursery in 1856.
- Raisins are noted in ancient writings as far back as 1490 B.C.E., but it wasn’t until 1876 when Scottish immigrant William Thompson developed a seedless grape variety in the San Joaquin Valley that the raisin industry was launched.
- Early USDA explorer Bernard Johnson became the “father of the California date industry” when he established a research station near the desert town of Mecca in the late 1880s.

For historical timelines, visit:
www.harvestofthemonth.com

What’s in a Name?

	Date	Dried Fig	Dried Plum	Raisin
Spanish	dátil	higo	ciruela pasa	pasa
Family	Arecaceae (Palm)	Moraceae (Mulberry)	Rosaceae (Rose)	Vitaceae (Grape)
Genus	<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Ficus</i>	<i>Prunus</i>	<i>Vitis</i>
Species	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	<i>Ficus carica</i>	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>
Varieties	Deglet Noor, Medjool, Zahidi, Khadrawy, Halawy; also grouped as soft, semi-soft and dry	Calimyrna and common type (Mission, Adriatic, Kadota)	California plum (graft of La Petite d’Agen and wild American plum)	Dark/purple raisin, golden raisin, dipped seedless, Muscat, Zante currant

Eat Your Colors

Fruits and vegetables come in a rainbow of colors. Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day — red, yellow/orange, white, green and blue/purple. These may lower the risk of some cancers. Dried fruits can be found in each of the color groups.

Color Group	Health Benefits	Examples of Fruits and Vegetables
Red	Help maintain heart health, memory function and urinary tract health	Dried apples, beets, dried cranberries, red currants, pomegranates, rhubarb, red peppers
Yellow/Orange	Help maintain heart health, vision health and healthy immune system	Golden raisins, yellow figs, dried apricots, mandarins, sweet potatoes, yellow squash
White/Tan/Brown	Help maintain heart health and cholesterol levels that are already healthy	Dates, dried figs, bananas, Asian pears, leeks, onions, garlic, cauliflower, jicama, quince, mushrooms
Green	Help maintain vision health and strong bones and teeth	Dried kiwi, dried green apples, bok choy, mustard greens, turnips
Blue/Purple	Help maintain healthy aging, memory function and urinary tract health	Dried plums, raisins, Zante currants, dried blueberries, eggplants, purple cabbage

For more information, visit:
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Mulching the Garden

As the rain season begins in California, help out the garden with a layer of mulch. Mulching is the process of spreading material on garden paths and around plants and trees. It helps stop weeds, erosion and mud. As mulch decomposes, it breaks down into organic material that feeds the soil.

Helpful Hints:

- Weed paths and garden beds before laying down mulch
- Most mulch is made from organic by-products (bark chips, wood chips, composted leaves, straw, newspaper, cardboard)
- Lay mulch down in layers two to four inches thick
- If mulch decomposes before summer, add another layer around plants to help retain soil moisture
- Free sources of mulch include tree trimmers, farmers, local waste districts or the California Materials Exchange (www.ciwmb.ca.gov/calmax)

Source: www.lifelab.org

For more information, visit:

www.csgn.org
www.garden.org



Home Grown Facts

- Ninety-five percent of the 30 million pounds of dates grown in the United States come from the Coachella and Salt River Valleys in Southern California.
- The Deglet Noor accounts for 90 percent of California's date crop.
- California's San Joaquin Valley grows 20 percent of the world's figs and 99 percent of the nation's crop.
- Two-thirds of California's fig crop consists of the Mission (black) and Calimyrna (golden) varieties.
- The three top fig-producing counties are Fresno, Madera and Merced.
- California is the world's leader of dried plums, producing about 65 percent of the world's supply and almost 99 percent of the nation's supply.
- Since 2001, California's dried plum crop has had an average annual value of about \$130 million.
- The top dried plum-producing counties are Sutter, Butte, Yuba, Tehama, Glenn and Tulare.
- In 2002, California produced about 174,000 tons of dried plums, 75,000 of which were exported to 50 countries.
- In the United States, raisins are produced almost exclusively in California's Central Valley (mostly in Fresno County) and represent nearly half of the world's supply.
- Ninety percent of raisin production comes from the Thompson seedless grape variety.

For more information, visit:

www.ers.usda.gov

www.cdfa.ca.gov

Student Advocates

- Dried fruits are rich with unusual and interesting facts from history. Have students develop a poster or student worksheet with brain teasers, clues or fill-in-the-blanks about the "Ancient History of Dried Fruits." **Example:**
 - In the 14th century, Roman physicians prescribed what dried fruit to cure mushroom poisoning and old age?
- Have students add messages promoting the health benefits of dried fruits. Display posters on campus or distribute to local grocery stores.
- In lieu of posters, students may develop advertising jingles to promote a dried fruit, such as figs or dates. Run the ads during school announcements.

Adventurous Activities

Geography Exploration:

California leads the nation in total fruit and vegetable production. Have students explore California's geography to learn why California is able to grow a diverse variety of fruits and vegetables. Topics to study may include:

- State and regional climates
- Land features and general topography
- Annual and monthly precipitation
- Types of soil

For more activities, visit:

www.harvestofthemonth.com

