




Harvest of the Month Food Facts December ~ Dried Fruit

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 The fig is actually an inverted flower while the seeds are the drupes, or real fruit.	2 On average, Americans consume about two pounds of raisins per year, slightly ahead of fresh grape consumption.	3 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.	4 California's San Joaquin Valley grows 20 percent of the world's figs and 99 percent of the nation's crop.	5 In 1876, Scottish immigrant William Thompson developed a seedless grape variety in the San Joaquin Valley and launched the raisin industry.
8 In 2002, California produced about 174,000 tons of dried plums, 75,000 of which were exported to 50 countries.	9 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.	10 The three top fig-producing counties in California are Fresno, Madera and Merced.	11 California's grape growers happened upon raisins accidentally when an early heat wave dried the grapes on the vine.	12 California plums are dehydrated by machines that lower the moisture content to about 15 percent.
15 Four pounds of fresh grapes yield one pound of raisins.	16 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.	17 After his failed gold mining venture, Frenchman Louis Pellier introduced Californians to dried plums at his Santa Clara Valley nursery in 1856.	18 There are about 250,000 date palm trees in the United States, most of which are on 5,000 acres in the Coachella Valley.	19 The fiber and sorbitol found in dried plums can help retain moisture in leaner cuts of red meat and poultry.
22 Athenians, including Plato, referred themselves as "philosykos," which translates to "friend of the fig."	23 Figs are the only fruit to fully ripen and semi-dry on the tree.	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas Day 	26 Dates require special environmental conditions to produce fruit – hot, arid weather, but plenty of ground water.
29 Date palm trees are grown either from offshoots of the mother tree or from seeds.	30 Figs are harvested in the late summer and early fall, but because they are dried and conveniently packaged, they are available all year long.	31 Today, there are more than 80,000 high production acres of dried plums concentrated in the Sacramento, Santa Clara, Sonoma, Napa, and San Joaquin Valleys.		



Nutrition Connections Made Easy



Harvest of the Month-it's more than taste testing

Your students have the opportunity to sample a different fruit or vegetable each month. Teachers share creative ways to integrate HOTM into the curriculum.

Language Arts

~ Vocabulary development (especially adjectives) ~ Writing Prompts ~ Poetry about fruits and vegetables ~ Similes ~ Songs

Geography

~ Map where a fruit or vegetable originated or grows ~ Connect to agriculture in California.

Math

~ Graph fruit or vegetable preferences ~ Compare two different fruits or vegetables with Venn diagrams ~ Fractions ~ Calculate the mean, median, and mode.

English Language Learning

~ Vocabulary development ~ Teach comparatives and superlatives ~ Compare two fruits or vegetables, state which you prefer, and two reasons why.

Art

~ Draw or paint the fruit/vegetable of the month. Ask cafeteria manager if you can display them in the cafeteria.

Health

~ Learn about the nutrients in the HOTM fruit or vegetable and how they help our bodies stay healthy.

Provided by Ventura Unified School District

Vitamin C

- ✓ Helps fight sickness
- ✓ Helps heal cuts and wounds
- ✓ Helps keep your teeth and gums healthy

Vitamin A

- ✓ Needed for healthy growth
- ✓ Helps keep your eyes and skin healthy
- ✓ Helps you fight sickness

Adapted from Nifty Nutrition

HOTM Books

Piggy Figgy Happy

By: Sterling C. Johnson
(Pre-2nd Grade)

California Fruit Raps

By: Karen Adler
(Pre-4th Grade)

Grapes to Raisins

By: Inez Synder
(Pre-1st Grade)

Nutrition Whip Around

1. What I like about dried fruit is _____.
2. Draw a picture of a raisin, dried fig, dried plum, or date.
3. How many words can you make from the letters in the words "dried fruit?"
4. Write an acrostic poem using the words "dried fruit."
5. List ways you can include dried fruit in your lunch or dinner.
6. Write a dinner menu including dried fruit.
7. Write three words that describe dried fruit.
8. List two ways you can eat more fruits in a day.
9. List two ways you can eat more vegetables in a day.
10. To what food group does dried fruit belong?
11. Don't forget to eat your colors! A dried plum is purple, name two more purple fruits.
12. List one way you can eat dried fruit.
13. Write one sentence asking an adult to buy the ingredients you need to make a dried fruit trail mix
14. Instead of chips, I can eat _____ for a healthful snack.

For more information regarding Harvest of the Month taste testing and nutrition education resources please contact:

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Merced County Office of Education***

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