

Harvest of the Month



Network for a Healthy California
December

The Harvest of the Month featured produce is **dried fruits**



Why Eat Dried Fruits?

- Most dried fruits like dates, figs, plums and raisins are a source of dietary fiber. Fiber helps maintain steady blood sugar levels.
- Dried fruits are a source of the mineral potassium. The body needs potassium to maintain muscle contractions and a healthy nervous system.
- Figs and raisins contain iron, an essential mineral important for energy.
- Dried fruits are also high in calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, B-complex vitamins and magnesium.

Health and Learning Success Go Hand-in-Hand

National Youth Health Day occurs in December. Fruits and vegetables help children grow, develop and do well in school. Make a commitment to your child's health by including a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks and encouraging your child to get at least one hour of physical activity every day.

TRAIL MIX

Ingredients:

(Makes 14 servings at ½ cup each)

2 cups dried fruits, chopped (at least 3 varieties)*

1 cup nuts**

2 cups pretzels

2 cups lowfat cereal or granola

*Dried fruits: dates, figs, plums, raisins, apples, apricots, cranberries, bananas, mangos

**Nuts: almonds, peanuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, walnuts, pistachios

1. Combine all ingredients in large bowl.
2. Place ½ cup servings in individual containers. Enjoy as snack or dessert.

Adapted from: *Power Play!* Trail Mix, Public Health Institute, 2003.

For more dried fruit recipes, visit: www.cachampionsforchange.net

Produce Tips

- Dried fruits are available all year.
- Look for dried fruits sold in bulk quantity.
- Buy dried fruits without added sugar. They are already sweet.
- Store dried fruits in airtight container to maintain freshness.
- Store in a cool, dry location like a cupboard or refrigerator.
- Freeze dried fruits before chopping. They will be less sticky and easier to chop.

Helping Your Child Eat Healthy

- Introduce your child to a variety of dried fruits (e.g., dates, figs, plums, apples) and pick your family's favorites.
- Add raisins or dried cranberries to hot and cold cereals.
- Top lowfat yogurt with dried fruit and lowfat granola cereal for breakfast, an afternoon snack or dessert.
- Keep small boxes or bags of dried fruits with you for an on-the-go snack.
- Add chopped dates and figs to salads.
- Let your child make trail mix.
- Serve dried fruits for dessert.

For more ideas, visit:

www.californiadriedplums.org

www.californiafigs.com

www.calraisins.org

www.datesaregreat.com

Let's Get Physical!

- Ask your child to help with chores that get the body moving.
- Make a calendar and schedule at least one activity for your family to do each day.
- Instead of watching TV, play a card or board game that exercises your brain.

For more physical activity ideas, visit:

www.verbnow.com

How Much Do I Need?

A serving of dried fruits is about one-quarter cup. This amount is about five to six dates; three to five dried figs; five dried plums; or a small box of raisins.

Help your child eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables throughout the day. These can be fresh, frozen, canned (in water or 100 percent fruit juice) or dried.

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

*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.

