Plum Good News

California Dried Plum Ingredients

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Two just released California Dried Plum Board technical bulletins highlight dried plums' ability to help food processors and foodservice operators address two important food industry issues: **requirements for restaurants to post calorie information and sodium reduction.**

Meeting Foodservice Menu Nutritional Disclosure With Dried Plums

The foodservice industry—particularly restaurants—is facing local, state and federal legislation requiring the posting of the nutritional content (particularly calories) of meals in their units. This is in response to growing consumer health concerns including obesity. Many operators worry that consumer nutrition and calorie awareness could reduce the eating quality of what they serve thereby lowering traffic, sales and profits.

Dried plums offer foodservice operators natural solutions to improving food nutrition without sacrificing food quality. These improvements result from dried plums' unique composition of naturally occurring fiber, sorbitol and malic acid to **replace fat calories with carbohydrate calories thus lowering overall food caloric levels.** Dried plums contain 2.57 calories per gram. Shortening, on-the-other-hand, contains 8.84 calories per gram. Replacing all or a portion of the shortening in a bakery formula not only reduces the fat content of finished baked goods but also the calories.

Leaner meat cuts that substitute for higher fat alternatives are equally improved in moisture and flavor when treated with dried plum ingredients. These natural improvements are made all the while food eating quality is equal to and in some instances better than higher fat alternatives. To access the technical bulletin go to: http://www.californiadriedplums.org/Industrial/ResearchAndBulletins/BulletinsList/?category=Reduced_Fat

Dried Plums' Nutrition Ingredient Benefits

Fiber	Seven percent (7%) fiber, half of which is soluble.
Sorbitol	15% sorbitol, more than any other food
Malic acid	1.5-2.0% malic acid to potentiate flavors
Fat-free	Thus, no saturated fat and no trans fat
Cholesterol free	No cholesterol
Unique sugars	No sucrose
Low glycemic index	GI of 29 +/-4, GL of 10

Limit Added Salt in Formulas Naturally With Dried Plums

Pressure is mounting for consumers to reduce salt intake. Only about 25% of the salt in the U.S. diet comes directly from the kitchen table salt shaker. A large proportion of the salt in the modern diet is in processed foods. Sodium is one of the most important ingredients in food, and not just for imparting taste. It helps bind together various elements of meat and cheese; it acts as a component in leavening systems, helping make bread rise, for instance; and it serves as a food preservative.

Food processors including ConAgra, Kraft, Kellogg and Sara Lee are among many that have already initiated sodium reduction programs targeting 20-35% decreases. But the primary issue with sodium reduction is one of flavor, particularly if a lower salt formula is to achieve parity in taste with higher sodium alternatives.

Dried plum ingredients offer food processors opportunities to reduce the amount of added salt in formulations without negatively impacting formula flavor objectives while maximizing consumer flavor expectations. This salt reduction is largely due to dried plums' 1.5-2.0% naturally occurring malic acid.

Dried Plums' Natural Salt-Reduction Capabilities

Dried Plums contain about 1.5-2.0% natural malic acid. This organic acid has been shown to be an effective flavor enhancer. Malic acid is released more slowly than other organic acids thus having a greater flavor carry-through during the chewing process. Taste retention allows for up to a 20-25% reduction in salt added to food formulations permitting other flavor contributors to become more perceptible. To access the technical bulletin go to: http://www.californiadriedplums.org/Industrial/ResearchAndBulletins/BulletinsList/?category=Bakery

Dried Plums' Potassium Content

Dried Plums are rich in potassium. Every 100 grams of dried plums contains 733 mg of potassium. Prune juice concentrate contains 752 mg of potassium per 100 g, dried plum puree 852 mg, fresh plum juice concentrate 834 mg and dried plum powder 1,050 per 100 mg.

Dried Plums At The Research Chefs Association Annual Meeting: Booth 323

The California Dried Plum Board will be exhibiting at the annual meeting of the Research Chefs Association in Phoenix on March 19. Foods to be demonstrated and sampled include phosphate-free chicken breast and various unique sausages designed by Master Chef Fritz Sonnenschmidt.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT: Dried Plum Powder Natural, Convenient, Effective Improvement For Many Ingredient Applications

Dried plum powder results from the entire dried plum further dried to 3.5% moisture. When the dried plum reaches this low moisture level several important changes occur in its nutrient composition. Total carbohydrates increase to 86.2% per 100 grams, sorbitol increases to 25.1% per 100 g and potassium increases to 1,050 mg per 100 g. Total fiber also increases to 9.9% per 100 g.

These powder characteristics become particularly important when water holding is a primary food formulation objective. Powder is very hydroscopic. This moisture binding capability contributes to an extended shelf life in bakery, meat, sauce, marinade and meat rub applications. Powder is also easily incorporated into a variety of dry applications including seasoning blends, bakery mixes, extruded snacks, breakfast/energy bars, etc. No more than 1% calcium stearate is added to powder as an anti-caking agent. Particulates are passed through a 20-mesh screen.

A Dried And Fresh Plum Ingredient For Every Meat Application

California dried plums are available for virtually every meat application. Dried plum powders, purees, pastes, juice concentrates, bits and pieces can be incorporated into most meat products. Fresh plum juice concentrate and prune fiber powder are two recent additions to the library of ingredients for meat use.