

The Value and Use of Prunes

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The Value and Use of Prunes*

The prune is a fruit with high food value and therefore deserves a more prominent place in the average diet than it now holds.

Oregon raises an abundance of prunes. The Oregon prune means the Italian prune, although the French or Petite prune is grown to some extent in the state. The Italian prune is larger, with a firmer meat or pulp, and is more tart than the Petite prune.

The aim of this bulletin is to suggest a few of the many possible ways of serving dried prunes in every-day meals.

I. THE FOOD VALUE OF PRUNES

1. **Energy.** Prunes are relatively high in energy. Four or five prunes are equal in energy to any one of the following: 1 medium-sized slice of bread, 1 medium-sized potato, $1\frac{1}{2}$ average apple, 2 large heads of lettuce, 1 very large orange or banana, or $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cooked oatmeal. When sugar is added the energy value is greatly increased.

2. **Iron.** Prunes contain iron. The iron in 4 or 5 prunes equals that in any one of the following: $3\frac{1}{2}$ slices of white bread, 3 large oranges, 2 large apples, 1 egg yolk, or 20 to 24 raisins. Iron is needed to build good blood and muscle. The lack of iron is not uncommon in the food of many families. Good meal planning will include economical iron-yielding foods, and the prune belongs in this list.

3. **Other minerals,** such as calcium (lime), phosphorus, etc., are also found in the prune, all of which are necessary for health.

4. **Vitamin B.** Prunes contain vitamin B, essential to the health of children and adults.

5. **Laxative.** Prunes are laxative. The soft, non-irritating pulp and skin furnish bulk, while the mild acid stimulates normal movements of the digestive tract.

6. **For infants.** Prune pulp is valuable in infant feeding. A baby, a few months old, may be given a teaspoonful of strained stewed prune pulp or juice. The quantity may be increased gradually. Besides being a mild laxative, prunes supplement milk in its lack of iron.

7. **For children.** Prunes are good for children. No better choice of cooked fruit can be made than stewed prunes as a breakfast fruit for any child. As a dessert, with cream or a plain cookie for variation, they are equally good.

To Summarize: The prune is a *wholesome, nutritious, economical* food because: (1) It supplies energy. (2) It is a good source of iron. (3) It contains other necessary minerals. (4) It contains vitamins. (5) It is a mild laxative. (6) It supplements the milk diet of infants. (7) It is a desirable fruit for all children.

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Prunes may be classed among the cheapest fruits. As sources of energy and minerals, prunes at 20 cents a pound are cheaper than apples at 4 cents or oranges at the lowest market price.

II. HOW TO COOK DRIED PRUNES

Method I. Wash thoroughly. Soak in water to cover (from 10 to 24 hours), adding water if necessary. Simmer gently in the water used in soaking until as tender as possible. Add sugar, if desired, after the prunes are tender, and cook five minutes longer. Prunes are very satisfactory with no sugar added in the cooking.

Method II (Short method). Carefully wash dried prunes in hot water. Then drain and cover well with hot water. Cover the sauce pan tightly and simmer the fruit very gently until tender. This takes 1 to 1½ hours. If sugar is desired add five minutes before cooking is completed.

III. PRUNE RECIPES

1. Whole Wheat Prune Muffins

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1½ c whole wheat flour | 1 c sour milk |
| ¾ c white flour | 1 t salt |
| 2 T shortening (melted) | ½ t soda |
| ¼ c sugar | 2 t baking powder |
| 1 egg | ¾ c prunes (cooked) |

Sift dry ingredients, except soda. Stone and cut or chop the prunes. Add beaten egg, sour milk, to which soda is added, and melted fat to flour mixture. Stir and add prunes. Fill oiled muffin tins two-thirds full of batter. Bake in a moderate oven 25 minutes.

2. Prune Baking Powder Bread

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2½ c whole wheat flour | 1 egg |
| ¼ c sugar | 1 c cooked prunes |
| 5¾ t baking powder | 1 c prune water and milk |
| 1 t salt | 2 T fat |

Break egg into the mixing bowl. Beat it and add chopped prunes. Put the water drained from the prunes into a measuring cup, and fill up the cup with milk. Add this liquid to the egg and prune mixture. Sift dry ingredients. Add the liquid mixture and the melted fat. Turn into an oiled bread pan and bake in a moderate oven from 45 to 60 minutes.

3. Prune Gingerbread

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 2 c flour | ½ t cloves |
| ½ t salt | 1 c thick sour milk |
| ¾ t soda | ½ c molasses |
| 1 t cinnamon | ½ c sugar |
| 2 t ginger | ½ c cooked prunes chopped |
| 1 egg | 2 T flour |
| 4 T fat | |

Sift all dry ingredients except the sugar. Beat the egg in a mixing bowl. Add the sour milk, molasses, and sugar. Melt fat and add it to the molasses mixture. Add dry ingredients. Add prunes to batter and turn into an oiled shallow pan. Bake in a moderate oven 20 to 30 minutes.

4. Prune Brown Betty

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|---|---|
| 2 c soft bread crumbs | $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon (juice and grated rind) added to |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c butter | 2 c prunes cooked, pitted and chopped or cut |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c brown sugar (use $\frac{3}{4}$ c if prunes are unsweetened) | $\frac{3}{4}$ c prune juice (varies with dryness of the bread crumbs) |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ t cinnamon | |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ t nutmeg | |

Melt fat and stir into bread crumbs. Put layer of crumbs in oiled baking dish, then layer of prunes. Sprinkle part of the sugar and spices over the prunes. Repeat layers until dish is full, making the crumbs the top layer. Pour prune juice over the mixture and bake in a moderate oven 30 minutes. Cover during the first 15 minutes.

Serve with hard sauce or with plain cream and sugar.

5. Spiced Prune Bread Pudding

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 c milk (scalded) | 2 T butter, melted |
| 1 c stale bread crumbs | $\frac{1}{2}$ t cinnamon |
| 2 egg yolks | $\frac{1}{2}$ t nutmeg |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ c sugar | 1 c cooked prunes |

Pit and chop or cut $\frac{3}{4}$ cup prunes; reserve the remainder, cut in halves, to put on the top. Pour scalded milk over bread crumbs, add beaten yolks, sugar mixed with spices, and melted butter. Pour mixture in an oiled baking dish and bake in a slow oven until firm. Spread top with halves of prunes and cover with a meringue made with the whites of the eggs. Serve hot or cold with a prune sauce or cream.

Prune Sauce

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1 c prune juice | $\frac{1}{4}$ c sugar and $\frac{1}{8}$ t cinnamon |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ T cornstarch | $\frac{1}{2}$ T butter |

Pour juice into the cornstarch and sugar mixture. Boil until thick. Add butter. Serve with pudding.

6. Prune Dressing for Roast Duck or Roast Goose

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 c stale bread crumbs moistened with water | 3 T butter |
| 2 T finely chopped onion | 1 c prunes softened by soaking, pitted, and cut in pieces |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt | Dash of pepper |
| 1 egg or none | |

Melt butter, beat egg and mix all ingredients together thoroughly.

Prunes give this dressing a delicious flavor; very suitable for ducks, geese, or wild game.

7. Prune Cobbler

Put stewed prunes, sweetened to taste, into a baking dish with juice sufficient to cover the fruit. Lay rich biscuit dough, slit open in the center, on top of the prunes. Brush top with milk or melted butter, and bake until crust is done through and browned. Serve hot as a pudding with or without cream.

8. Prune Steamed Graham Pudding

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| $\frac{1}{4}$ c shortening | $\frac{1}{2}$ t soda |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c molasses | 1 t salt |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c milk | 1 c prunes, cooked, pitted, and chopped |
| 1 egg | |
| $1\frac{1}{2}$ c graham flour | |

Melt shortening; add molasses, milk, beaten egg, and dry ingredients (mixed and sifted). Flour prunes slightly and stir into mixture. Turn into an oiled pudding mold (or baking powder can), cover tightly, and steam $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Serve with Sterling Sauce.

9. Sterling Sauce

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| $\frac{1}{4}$ c butter | 1 t vanilla or $\frac{1}{2}$ t nutmeg |
| 1 c brown sugar | 2 T cream |

Cream butter, add sugar gradually, add cream and flavoring very slowly.

10. Prune Whip Pie

Make a prune whip following your favorite recipe. Line a pie tin with pastry and bake. Fill the shell with the prune whip piling the mixture high in the shell. Bake in a moderate oven (350° F.) until firm to the touch and slightly browned (about 30 min.). Cool and serve with or without whipped cream.

11. Prune Cake

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| $1\frac{1}{8}$ c sugar | $\frac{1}{2}$ t cloves |
| 4 T melted fat | $\frac{1}{4}$ t allspice |
| 3 egg yolks | $\frac{1}{2}$ t cinnamon |
| 1 c chopped cooked prunes | $\frac{1}{2}$ t nutmeg |
| $\frac{2}{3}$ c prune juice | 1 t soda |
| $2\frac{1}{2}$ c flour | 1 t baking powder |

Mix fruit, sugar, fat, juice, and beaten egg yolks together. Sift spices, soda, baking powder, and flour together and add to fruit mixtures. Stir only enough to mix thoroughly. Bake in moderate oven.

12. Gelatin Plum Pudding

Dissolve one package of Orange Gelatin in 1 pint boiling water. Add to hot Gelatin.

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|---|
| $\frac{3}{4}$ c grape nuts |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ c cooked prunes, pitted and sweetened |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c raisins |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ c currants and a few nuts |

A pinch of cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. Pour into individual molds.

Cool, unmold and serve with whipped cream.

IV. MENUS USING PRUNES

1. Breakfasts

Cracked wheat Cooked prunes
 stirred in before serving
 Toast Bacon Coffee

Home-made sausage
 Apple sauce Whole wheat
 Prune muffins
 Coffee

2. Suppers

Vegetable milk chowder
 Whole wheat bread
 Prune Roly-Poly
 Beverage

Baked vegetable and meat hash
 Prune baking powder bread
 Baked apples — Beverage

Scalloped macaroni and tomato
 Apple, cauliflower, and nut salad
 Rolled oats bread
 Prune spice cake Beverage

Creamed chicken on toast
 Carrot cabbage salad Toast
 Stewed prunes Sponge cake
 Beverage

Potato-carrot-milk soup
 Prune, cottage cheese, and
 nut salad
 Whole wheat bread
 Beverage

Baked beans Cold-slaw
 Steamed brown bread
 Prune brown betty with cream
 Beverage

3. Dinners

Meat loaf Scalloped potatoes
 Buttered carrots Whole wheat
 bread
 Prune pie
 Beverage

Meat stew with vegetables and
 dumplings
 Steamed graham prune pudding
 Sterling sauce
 Beverage

V. OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR USING PRUNES

1. Stewed

With apricots
 With few slices of orange and a stick of cinnamon
 With figs

2. Prunes with cereals

1. Cooked, chopped prunes stirred into cooked cream of wheat, oatmeal, cracked wheat, hominy, rice, or other cereals
2. Arrange a layer of left-over cereal in an oiled baking dish, then layer of cooked and pitted prunes, repeating until dish is full. Pour prune juice over the top and bake.

3. Prune yeast bread

Substitute prunes for raisins in raisin bread recipe
 Prune sandwiches

4. Salads

1. Prunes and cold boiled ham
2. Prunes with cottage cheese
3. Prunes with plain cheese and nuts
4. Prunes with marshmallows and nuts
5. Prunes with apples and celery
6. Prunes with oranges, bananas, and pineapple
7. Prunes on slices of pineapple

5. Desserts

1. Prune whip with custard sauce
2. Prune rice pudding
3. Prune gelatine pudding
4. Prune tapioca
5. Prune steamed suet pudding
6. Stewed prunes with custard sauce
7. Prune pie (two crusts)
8. Prune pie (one crust) with whipped cream or meringue

6. Miscellaneous

1. Stuffed prunes (as confections) using cheese and nuts, peanut butter, marmalade, or fondant
2. Glazed prunes
3. Prune conserve
4. Prune pickle
5. Prune stuffing for fowl