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Using and Storing Dried Fruits
Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service
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DRIED FRUITS

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Currants, raisins, dates, figs, prunes and other dried fruits are great additions to many baked items. Because they are dried, their natural sugars and flavors are concentrated.

Special Considerations

To plump or soften dried fruit, try one of the following methods:

- Cover the fruit with boiling water or fruit juice. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before draining.
- Place fruit in steamer over boiling water. Steam for 3 to 5 minutes.
- In microwave: Place 1 cup of fruit in a dish. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of water and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on "high" for 1-1/2 minutes, stirring once. Let stand 3 to 5 minutes.

When cutting dried fruits for recipes, try one of the following methods to make the job easier:

- Toss fruit in some of the flour used in the recipe before cutting.
- Coat scissors or knife with vegetable oil.
- Rinse knife in hot water occasionally while cutting to prevent stickiness.

How to Store **Dried Fruits**

Package dried fruits in moistureresistant, airtight containers, such as heavy plastic bags, glass jars or plastic containers with tight fitting

Store containers in a cool, dark place. For long-term storage, refrigeration is best.

How to Use Dried Fruits

Use plain as nutritious snacks or as an ingredient in pies, salads, cookies, cakes, sauces, puddings and casseroles.

Dried Fruits are Nutritious

All dried fruits are good sources of fiber, potassium, iron and several B vitamins. Prunes are an excellent source of vitamin A.

Dried fruits are a concentrated source of sugar. A 3-1/2 ounce serving of dried fruit provides about 300 calories.



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Raisin Sauce

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

1-1/2 cups cider or apple juice

1/2 cup raisins

Melt butter. Mix in flour. Add fruit juice and raisins. Cook until mixture boils, stirring constantly. Simmer about 10 minutes or until thickened. Serve over baked ham.

Rice Lentil Polou

1/2 medium onion

3 tablespoons oil

I cup raw brown or white rice

1/4 cup raw lentils

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

2-1/2 cups water or vegetable stock

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup sunflower seeds or chopped almonds

Chop onion and saute in 2 tablespoons of oil until soft. Add rice and cook, stirring for several minutes. Combine tomato paste, water and cinnamon. Add this mixture, along with the lentils, to the rice. Bring to a boil, cover tightly, turn heat very low, and simmer for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir in salt, nuts and raisins. Coat a baking dish with the remaining tablespoon of oil and 1 tablespoon of hot water. Pour in rice mixture. Cover and bake for 20 to 30 minutes.

Prepared by Sally Wheeker, Livingston County Extension Home Economist, and Virginia Messina, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist, MSU.

Prune Cake

1/2 cup shortening

I cup sugar

2 eggs

1 cup cooked prunes, chopped

1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup nuts, chopped

1-1/2 cups flour

I teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon soda

1 teaspoon cinnamon

3/4 teaspoon cloves

1/2 teaspoon salt

Cream shortening and sugar. Beat in eggs one at a time. Add prunes. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk. Add nuts. Bake in greased and floured 13×9×2 inch pan at 375°F. for 30 to 35 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean.

Date Bars

3 eggs, at room temperature

I cup flour

pinch of salt

1 cup dates, chopped

I cup sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

I cup walnuts, chopped powdered sugar

Beat eggs 5 minutes at high speed. Add flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Fold in dates and nuts. Pour into 2 greased and floured 9×9 inch pans. Bake at 325°F. for 25 to 30 minutes. Cut into squares and cover completely with powdered sugar.

Makes 2 pans.

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