



NUTRITION VALUE OF PLUM TREE FOR HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

A Plum is a fruit that belongs to the family of peaches and cherries. This fruit is generally round in shape and at times can be oval or heart shaped as well. In addition to the health benefits of peaches and cherrie, it is rich in dietary fiber, which helps improving the digestive system. There are many different varieties of plums available, these are found in different colors like red, blue-black, purple, yellow, green or amber. This is a very delicious and juicy fruit. The plum is a tree, much like the peach but more erect growing. It is more beneficial to the health.

KEYWORDS: Prone, Bloom, Apricots, Neocholinergics

INTRODUCTION

In general, European plums are bigger and more erect compared to Japanese plums. The leaves of the plum are elliptic or ovate with obtuse or acute tips, short petioles and also crenulated margins. Japanese plum trees feature rougher bark and more flowers compared to the European plums. The plants are also stronger, more disease resistant, and more vigorous than the European plums. The flowers of plums are very much the same in morphology to the peach, but smaller, white in color, with longer pedicels. In nature, European plums bloom later than the Japanese plums there by less frost prone. Wonderfully delicious and juicy plums are botanically belongs to the family of rosaceae. The dried plum called a prune is also very tasty. Always wash the plums with some cold running water before eating them. It is best to have a plum whole with the skin. Plums are also used as a key ingredient in preparing cakes, pies, desserts, jelly and jams. The plum fruit is a drupe, oval in the European varieties and conical to round in the Japanese varieties. Bloom is normally found on glabrous surface. Plums need 2 1/2 to 6 months to grow fruit, with the Japanese plums ripening in shorter periods (around 3 months). Thinning is important for proper development for the Japanese varieties, but not at all times needed for the European varieties, especially prunes, as they are usually not as floriferous, plus the fruit set is normally lighter.¹

How to select and buy plums?

Plums can be found throughout the year but those with the best quality are usually seen between May and September. Pick plums with vibrant color while in the store and those still contain a bit of whitish bloom, suggesting that they haven't yet been over handled. Steer clear of those that are soft, with cuts and bruises. Ripen plums give to slight pressure and have sweet fragrance.

Plums Nutrition Value

The fruit is a drupe belonging to the genus: Prunus which also includes peaches, nectarine, almonds and damson. Scientific name: *Prunus domestica*. The plant is best described as small tree or large shrub and widely cultivated in the United States, Europe, Japan and china. Many cultivars of plums are grown all over the world which differs in their

color, size and growing characteristics based upon their country of origin. Generally, each variety of plum tree bears numerous, almost uniform sized fruits between May and September months. Each fruit is about the size of medium sized tomato, measuring about 5-6 cm in diameter and weigh about 70 g. It has central depression at the stem side. Internally, the pulp is juicy and varies widely from creamy yellow, crimson, light blue or light green in color depending upon the cultivar type. There is centrally placed single, smooth but hard stone like seed. Seeds are inedible. It has sweet and tart taste pulp with pleasant aroma. Some common cultivars of plums are: cherry plum, damson, blackthorn plum. Plum mainly contain different types of nutrients like Vitamin C, K, A. It also contain Fiber, Tryptophan, potassium and Calories.²

Selection And Storage

Plums are available year round but they are at their best between May till September. In the store, look for fresh fruits featuring rich color and may still have a slight whitish "bloom," indicating that they have not been over handled. Avoid those ones with excessively soft, or with cuts or bruises. Ripen fruits yield to gentle pressure and features sweet aroma. Slightly hard mature plums can be kept at room temperature till they ripen. Ripe ones can be placed in the refrigerator but should be bring to room temperature before being eaten to enjoy their rich flavor. Dry plums called as prunes can be stored at room temperature for few days.

Nutrition Benefits Of Eating Plums

- Delicious, fleshy, succulent plums are low in calories and contain no saturated fats; but contain numerous health promoting compounds, minerals and vitamins.
- Plums, even their dried form known as 'prunes', are high in unique phytonutrients called neochlorogenic and chlorogenic acid. Their function is that of an antioxidant and is of much benefit to the body.
- Since plums are rich in antioxidants, they provide protection from superoxide anion radical and also prevent damage to our neurons and fats that form a part of our cell membranes.

- Consumption of plums helps in the production and absorption of iron in the body, thus leading to better blood circulation, which further leads to the growth of healthy tissues.
- Regular consumption of plums can prevent macular degeneration and any other infection of the eye, in the long run. Your eyes will be healthy and strong for long time and you can also retain a sharp eye-sight.
- Researchers have found that plums have anti-cancer agents that may help prevent the growth of cancerous cells and tumors in the body.
- Eating plums also reduces your chances of contracting a heart disease in the long run. Plums have certain cleansing agents that keep the blood pure and prevent complications of the heart.
- Plums have high content of Vitamin C, which means that they help protect the body against health conditions like asthma, colon cancer, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.
- Plum juice concentrate is effective in preventing and reducing human influenza A.
- Certain health benefiting compounds present in the plum fruits, such as dietary fiber, sorbitol, and isatin are known to help regulate the functioning of the digestive system and thereby used in constipation conditions.³

Preparation And Serving Method

Wash plums in cold running water just before using. Fresh ripe plums should be enjoyed as a whole along with skin. Incise lengthwise deeply till the hard seed felt and then remove the seed. Skin may be peeled off using paring knife as in apples. However, its peel not only provides good fiber content but also contains some health benefiting anti-oxidant pigments. Therefore, just wash the fruit and enjoy without discarding the skin. They can also be baked or stewed. Plum sections are a great addition to salads. The fruits are being used in the preparation of pie, desserts, jams and jellies. They can also be used in a variety of recipes and are usually baked or poached. Dried plums in general known as prunes are added to muffins, cakes, ice-creams as in other dry fruits like raisins, apricots and figs.⁴

Safety Profile

Plums contain oxalic acid, a naturally occurring substance found in some fruits and vegetables which may crystallise as oxalate stones in the urinary tract in some people. Therefore, people with known oxalate urinary tract stones are advised to avoid eating plums. Adequate intake of water is therefore advised to maintain normal urine output even if these individuals want to eat them. They contain fibre, potassium, vitamin A, calcium, magnesium, iron, minerals, and vitamin C, are low in fat and contain no calories. They are the perfect fruit to eat when you are busy, or on the run.⁵

Dried Plums

Dried plums are from the European side, being purple in color, slightly smaller, denser and a little less juicy than many other types. Dried plums, also known as prunes are another great way of eating them and still get all the health

benefits the fresh fruit contains. You will gain all the health benefits of prunes as you do eating them fresh. Prune juice is very beneficial for your health and can help with problems such as, constipation. Dried plums are actually higher in antioxidants than fresh. Another good thing about eating them dried is, you can eat them straight out of the packet, you don't need to put them in the fridge, and they are always in season and easy to carry around in your bag for a quick snack. If you are watching your weight, you probably don't want to go overboard eating prunes, fresh would be better. Prunes, like any dried fruit are higher in sugar. Whichever way you eat your plums, dried or fresh, know you are doing something good for yourself, in helping to fight aging and look younger. Plum benefits are many and if someone in the family does not like the taste of plums, try looking at some plum recipes.⁶

Plums Anti-Cancer Agents

Plums contain vitamins and nutrients that can cure diseases, strengthens the immunity system and recent research shows that plums can cure cancer such as breast and colon. Plums, even in their dried form known as 'prunes' are high in unique phytonutrients or their anti-cancer agents called neochlorogenic and chlorogenic acid. The phenols from plums got together with breast cancer cells, the malignant cells were killed. The phenols are organic compounds that occur in fruits. They are slightly acidic and may be associated with traits such as aroma, taste or color. Plums' extract are important because of their particularly high phenolic content. Chlorogenic and neochlorogenic phenols from these peaches and plums were found to kill breast cancer cells, without harming healthy cells. These fruit phenols on the most aggressive types of breast cancer cells, the cancer died and the healthy cells were unaffected.⁷

CONCLUSION

Plum is a rich source of fiber and antioxidants that appear to provide a variety of health benefits related to cardiovascular disease, tumorigenesis, and osteoporosis. Certain health benefiting compounds present in the plum fruits, such as dietary fiber, sorbitol, and isatin are known to help regulate the functioning of the body.

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Figure.1 Plum Fruit



Figure.2 Dried Plum Fruit

Table.1 Nutrition Values of Plum Tree

Nutrients in Plum 1.00 each (66.00 grams)		
Sr. No.	Nutrient	% Daily Value
1	Vitamin C	10.4
2	Vitamin K	2
3	Vitamin A	4.5
4	Fiber	3.6
5	Tryptophan	3.1
6	Potassium	2.9
7	Calories	1