

Holiday Entertaining

Prepare A Plum Perfect Holiday Dressing

(NAPS)—It happens every year, all across America. The holiday traditionalists square off with the innovators. On one side of the table, the former insist on time-honored family recipes. Meanwhile, the latter want something a little different, just this once. Sound familiar?

Perhaps this year, it's time for a compromise—such as a classic dressing with a nontraditional twist—dried plums. They'll add a touch of moisture and a hint of sweetness that go perfectly with the sweet-savory palate and, remarkably, they can even give a boost to other ingredients you combine them with.

"I use California Dried Plums in my cooking all the time, because they add moisture and flavor-enhancing benefits," said Chef and Owner Sean O'Brien of San Francisco's Zinnia Restaurant. "There are natural elements in dried plums which help heighten the flavors of other ingredients in a recipe—whether it's a dessert or something savory."

It's the fiber and sorbitol, a sugar alcohol, in dried plums that give them their unique moisture-enhancing qualities. In addition to providing benefits as a cooking or baking ingredient, dried plums are conveniently ready-to-eat right from the package as a healthful snack. Packed with important vitamins, minerals and antioxidant power, they can help you achieve and maintain good digestive health—and that may mean better health overall.

And as for holiday dressings, "dried plums will make a dramatic difference in both moisture and flavor," O'Brien said. "No more bland, bone-dry stuffing."

And no more debating over tradition. This holiday season, add



Plum Perfect—California Dried Plums are the chef's secret for moist, flavorful cooking.

some chopped dried plums to that favorite family dressing, or try this easy recipe. Either way, you'll have something both culinary conservatives and progressives can agree on—moist, sweet, plum perfect dressing.

Want more holiday entertaining ideas? Try stuffing dried plums with roasted walnuts, then rolling in sugar for a treat that truly sparkles. Here's another appetizer idea to add to your holiday menu: dried plums stuffed with blue cheese wrapped with thinly sliced prosciutto, broiled just until meat starts to brown.

California Dried Plum and Chestnut Holiday Dressing

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 50 minutes

1 (1-pound) loaf rustic multigrain bread
4 tablespoons butter or vegetable oil
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced onions
1 tablespoon crushed fennel seed

2 cups coarsely chopped pitted California Dried Plums

1½ cups coarsely chopped cooked chestnuts*

½ cup chopped parsley

1 teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

4 cups turkey or fat-free low sodium chicken broth

2 eggs (optional)

Heat oven to 400°F. Cut crust from bread and discard. Cut bread into large pieces; pulse in food processor to coarse crumbs. In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add celery, onions and fennel seed. Cook, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes or until vegetables are soft. In large bowl, combine bread crumbs, vegetables, dried plums, chestnuts, parsley, salt and pepper. Add broth and mix gently but thoroughly. (If using eggs, whisk with broth before adding to rest of ingredients.) Transfer to 2-quart shallow oven-proof baking dish; cover loosely with buttered sheet of foil, buttered side down. Bake 30 minutes; remove foil and bake 15 to 20 minutes more or until top is browned.

Yield: 8 servings (1 cup/serving).

*Cooked chestnuts are available canned, bottled or vacuum-packed. Be sure to purchase unsweetened chestnuts.

Nutrition Information Per Serving (without eggs): 338 calories; 15 mg cholesterol; 73 calories from fat; 8 g fat; 394 mg sodium; 58 g carbohydrate; 7 g protein; 6 g fiber; 610 mg potassium

For more recipes featuring California Dried Plums, visit www.californiadriedplums.org.

Did You Know?

For a classic dressing with a nontraditional twist, dried plums add a touch of moisture and a hint of sweetness to holiday meals. They can even give a boost to other ingredients you combine them with. For recipes, visit www.californiadriedplums.org.

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