



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

PLUMS



Plums are stone fruits that grow on trees. They are a member of the Rosaceae family along with apples, cherries, peaches, and strawberries. North American wild plum trees can be found growing in woodlands, pastures, and along streams. While not cultivated in orchards, wild plums can be eaten fresh and used in homemade jams and jellies. Wild plum trees also provide nesting cover to birds and are beneficial to bumble bees, honeybees, and butterflies. European plums were cultivated from wild plums native to the Caucasus mountains near present day Armenia and Azerbaijan. Asian plums are native to China and Japan. Both types of plums were cultivated over 4,000 years ago and are the types of plums grown in orchards today. European and Asian plums made their way around the world on trade and emigration routes. Plums are a firm, juicy fruit that can range in taste from sweet to tart. Plums can be consumed fresh, baked, boiled, canned, dried, fermented, grilled, juiced, pickled, sautéed, and stewed. In Michigan, plums are harvested from July through September.



PLUMS ARE

- A good source of vitamin C*. Vitamin C is important to the body's tissues and supports a healthy immune system.
- A source of fiber. Fiber helps us feel fuller and benefits the digestive and cardiovascular systems.

**Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium, and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

MICHIGAN MADE

Plums grow well in Michigan's Lower Peninsula near Lake Michigan and the Southern shore of Lake Erie. Michigan is the fifth largest producer of plums in the nation. There are over 265 farms growing plums on about 525 acres. Popular plum varieties grown in the state include Damson, NY6, NY9, and Stanley. Many Michigan orchards offer "u-pick" operations where consumers can hand pick plums. Michigan plum growers primarily grow plums for the fresh market. They also grow plums for the canned, dried, juice, brandy, and wine markets. Orchards with the highest plum production in the state are located in Allegan, Berrien, Leelanau, Newaygo, Saginaw, Washtenaw, and Van Buren Counties.

FUN FACTS

- Plums are the second most cultivated fruit in the world after apples.
- Plum skins can be shades of red, amber, yellow, green, blue, purple, and black. Plum flesh can be shades of red, amber, yellow, or white.
- European plums are usually small, round, firm, starchy, and sweet with a yellow, green, or bluish skin.
- Asian plums, commonly called Japanese plums, are usually large, oblong, soft, plump, and juicy with pale or golden yellow, reddish, or black skin.
- Dried plums are called prunes.
- The natural white powdery coating on plums is called epicuticular wax, it keeps moisture in and bacteria out.
- Red plums taste sweet and black plums taste tart.
- There are three categories of plums, freestone, semi-free, and clingstone.
- Freestone plums have stones that are easy to remove from the flesh and a low water content. Plums with a low water content are good for eating and great for preserves, dried, and canned foods.
- Semi-free plums have stones that are somewhat easy to remove and a medium water content. Plums with a medium water content are great for eating, stewing, and preserves.
- Clingstone plums have stones that cling to the flesh and a high water content. Plums with a high water content are excellent for eating, juices, and preserves.

BUYING AND STORING

- Select firm, plump plums with smooth skin and a solid color that give slightly to pressure.
- Store at room temperature until ripe. Store ripe whole plums in the refrigerator for up to five days. To freeze: halve, pit, and quarter ripe plums. Freeze on a lined sheet pan overnight, transfer to freezer bags or containers, and freeze up to six months.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.





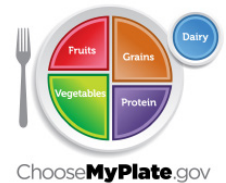
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MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, plums are available frozen, dried, canned, and juiced. When buying packaged plums, be sure to read labels and choose items with no added sugar and juices that are pasteurized, unsweetened, and 100% juice. Unpasteurized juices may contain harmful bacteria that can make you sick.

EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Plums are part of the Fruit Group. Most people need 1–2 cups of fruit per day. For more information visit: myplate.gov.



IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

SUMMER STONE FRUIT SALAD

Time: 10 minutes | Makes: 10 servings | Serving Size: About ½ cup

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 60, Carbohydrate 13g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 2g, Total Fat 0g, Saturated Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 6mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



INGREDIENTS

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| 2 large plums, pitted and sliced | ¾ cup nonfat vanilla or mixed berry Greek yogurt |
| 2 medium peaches, pitted and sliced | 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, leaves stripped, and stems discarded (optional) |
| 2 medium nectarines, pitted and sliced | ⅓ cup toasted walnuts or pecans, finely chopped (optional) |
| 1 pint fresh blueberries | |
| 2 tablespoons lemon juice, about 1 lemon | |

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine fruit and lemon juice in a large bowl.
2. Fold in yogurt with fruit by gently turning over until combined.
3. Garnish with herbs and chopped nuts, if using. Serve.

CHANGE IT UP

- Blend with 100% apple juice and ice cubes for a refreshing batch of smoothies.
- Use as a breakfast topping for stovetop oatmeal, overnight oats, grits, or millet porridge.
- Replace yogurt with crumbled goat cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

TRY THIS

- Try grilled plums. Place pitted and halved plums cut-side down on a hot grill for a few minutes and serve.
- Freeze diced plums and add to pancake and waffle batter, parfaits, and smoothies.
- Add chopped plums to cereal, granola, oatmeal, soba noodles, rice, or any whole grain bowl imaginable.