



PLUM TALKING POINTS

2. Slice of Plum History

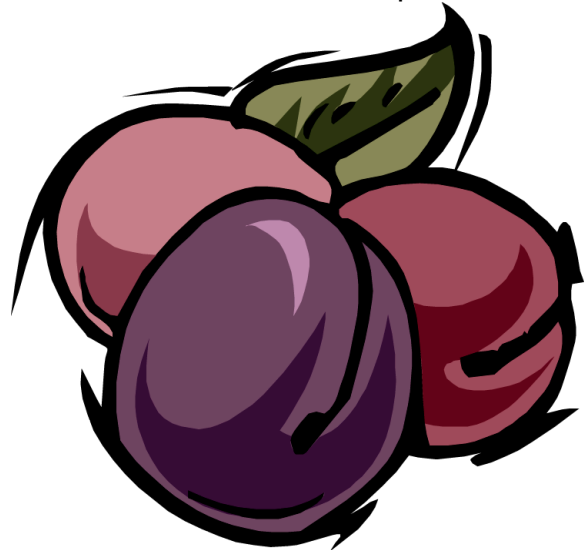
- Like peaches, plums originated in China about 4,000 years ago.
- The species *Prunus salicina* (Japanese plum) originated in China, but was domesticated in Japan 400 years ago.
- John Kelsey, a nurseryman from Berkeley, brought the plum from Japan to California in 1870.
- Early colonists brought the European plum, *Prunus domestica*, to America and pioneers traveled West with it during the Gold Rush.
- The dried plum industry arose in California after the Gold Rush.
- Plums (*Prunus domestica*) date back in writing to 479 B.C. They were prominent in the writings and songs of Confucius which include a listing of popular foods of Chinese culture. In 65 B.C., Pompey the Great introduced the plum to the orchards of Rome, and Alexander the Great eventually brought them to the Mediterranean regions. Early American colonists found wild plums growing along the east coast, but today the common European plum has replaced the native wild plum in popularity and as a commercial crop. Plums are now the second most cultivated fruit in the world, second only to apples.
- The plum tree plays a significant role in Chinese mythology and is associated with great age and wisdom. Blossoms of the plum tree are carved on jade to signify resurrection.

3. How Do Plums Grow?

- Unlike other stone fruits, plum trees are adaptable to a wider range of climatic conditions. Both Japanese

and European plums thrive where rainfall during the growing season is minimal (less than 30-45 inches annually). In winter, plum trees require pruning and a chilling, or rest, period (between 800-850 “chill hours”).

- The plum is a stone fruit tree of the Rose family. This deciduous tree produces white flowers in clusters of one to five, each flower with five petals. The flowering plants produce drupes, or fleshy fruits surrounding stone pits. Plums are related to other stone fruits such as peaches, apricots, and cherries, which are also drupes. The plum is more diverse than its relatives and grows in a wide range of shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors. Plums have a groove running down one side, smooth skin, and stone pits.



4. What's in Season?

- California grown plums are in peak season during summer. They are usually available from May to October. California grown varieties may be fresher and cost less than varieties shipped from other states or countries.

5. Reasons to Eat Plums

- One medium-sized plum provides:
- A good source of vitamin C, also vitamin A and fiber.
- More About Vitamin C and Iron:
- Vitamins are nutrients that are necessary for your body to grow and function.
- Vitamin C helps your body heal cuts and wounds.
- It also helps absorb more iron found in food.
- Iron is a mineral (like calcium and phosphorus). It is usually combined with a protein to form hemoglobin, which transports oxygen to and from cells. Although most iron is in the blood, it is also in every cell. It is used for many functions, like: changing beta carotene into vitamin A and helping make collagen, new red blood cells, and antibodies to fight infection and clear toxins out of the blood.
- It is important to include iron-enhancing foods in your meals, such as fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C. Vitamin C and iron work together so when you eat food that has vitamin C as well another food that has iron in it, the body is better able to absorb the iron.

6. How do you pick a good Plum?

- Look for plums with solid color—red, purple, black, light green, or yellow.
- Choose firm plums that give slightly to gentle pressure.
- Ripen hard plums in a paper bag at room temperature for up to three days.
- Store ripe plums in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Healthy Serving Ideas

- Pack whole ripe plums in lunches or enjoy as afternoon snacks.
- Add sliced plums to green salads.
- Make a stone fruit salad with peaches, plums, and apricots.
- Top low-fat yogurt with sliced plums and granola for breakfast or dessert.
- Blend fresh or frozen plums with low-fat milk and ice. Or, substitute milk with low-fat frozen yogurt.

Fun Facts

- A “plumcot” is 50% plum and 50% apricot.
- An “aprium” is 75% apricot and 25% plum.
- A “pluot” is 75% plum and 25% apricot.
- Wild plum trees are symbolic of independence.
- Luther Burbank brought twelve plum seeds back from Japan, now almost all plums grown in the United States are related to those seeds.