



FOCUS ON FRUITS



Begin each nutrition education lesson with a short physical activity break from the card set provided by IDPH. Have fun and get active with your students!

Objectives

Learn that raisins are dried grapes.

Learn where and how grapes are grown.

Learn some ways grapes are eaten.

Supplies Needed

March

Pick a **better snack**™ & **Act** bingo card

Kindergarten: Raisins for tasting

1st Grade: Raisins for activity and tasting

Glass of water

Glass of carbonated water

Tasting Opportunities

Featured Fruits:

Raisins (dried fruit)

Background

Raisins are sun-dried grapes. (Some are dried in different ways than sun-drying.) Grapes are picked by hand around the end of August when they are ripe. The grapes are laid out on paper trays and dried in the sun. It takes about three weeks for the grapes to dry to raisins!

A vineyard is the name of the place where grapes grow. Grapes grow on plants that are called vines; hence a vineyard. A vine is any plant with a long stem that grows along the ground or climbs a support like a fence by winding or clinging with tendrils that clasp onto the support as it grows.

One popular story of when grapes were first dried into raisins in the United States occurred in 1873. There was a drought and many of crops dried up. The resulting dried grapes were marketed as “Peruvian Delicacies.” They were very popular and sold out quickly!

It takes about four and one-half pounds of grapes to yield 1 pound of raisins.

Most raisins are made from the Thompson Seedless Grape. Most of the raisins we eat in the United States are grown in California.

Raisins taste very sweet because the sugar inside them concentrates as the grapes dry. Sometimes they are called “nature’s candy”! They also contain fiber and iron. Iron is a mineral our bodies need in small quantities.

Other fruit can be dried like grapes. Have you tried dried plums, apricots, apples, pineapples, or pears?

Another name for a dried plum is a prune. Plums grow on trees. The plum orchards have water and nutrients added to the soil. In the early spring, blossoms on the plum trees develop and the fruit begins to grow. The fruit continues to

grow until it is ready to be harvested. A machine grabs the tree trunk and a layer of fabric catches the fruit. The plums are washed, dehydrated, and pitted.

In 1905, a farmer had an idea to bring 500 monkeys from Panama to pick the plums. The monkeys were divided into groups of 50 and let loose, with human supervision, in the orchard. The monkeys did a good job picking the fruit. However, the monkeys ate all of the fruit they picked!

Most of the plums in the United States are grown in California.

One-fourth cup of dried fruit is equivalent to one-half cup of fruit.

Dried fruit is “sticky” and can cling to teeth. It is important to brush our teeth after eating dried fruit.

Note to teachers: Dental health professionals recommend that sugary, sticky fruits, such as raisins, should be eaten with other foods (at a meal) or all at once (e.g. one box of raisins) rather than snacking on small amounts throughout the day. If a child can’t brush their teeth, sugar-free gum may be a reasonable substitute to remove sticky sugar from their teeth.

*Information adapted from www.sunmaid.com, www.calraisins.org and www.californiadriedplums.org.

Web Site Resources

www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabetersnack
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
www.choosemyplate.gov
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard

Do the Activity: Kindergarten

Play a game of “Telephone.”

Explain that there is an old saying: “I heard it through the grapevine.” That means you heard a story from someone, who heard the story from someone else, who heard the story from someone else and so on, along a line of people (like a grapevine grows, twisting and turning as it goes.) Divide the class into small groups of ten or less. Whisper the saying: “Raisins are made from grapes and are sweet.” to the first person, and see if it comes out the same at the end of the “grapevine” line when it is whispered all around the room.

Raisins that Jump

1st Grade

Fill 1 glass with water. Fill another glass with carbonated water. Explain to the class that the carbonated water is water with air bubbles added. Put 5-10 raisins in the water. Put 5-10 raisins in the carbonated water. Watch the raisins “jump” out of the water. Explain to the students that the air bubbles move the raisins out of the water. (*Adapted from Snackin’ Smart, Ohio Dept of Education.*)

HINT: Raisins need to be very moist; you may need to cut them in half to “react”.

**Talk It Over:
Kindergarten**

Did the saying “Raisins are made from grapes and are sweet.” stay the same at the end of the grapevine?

Why is a raisin sweeter than a grape? (*As the grape dries, the water evaporates, leaving the sweet taste behind.*)

1st Grade

Why are raisins smaller than grapes? (*Water is taken out of the grapes, making them smaller.*)

How would a raisin that was placed in water look? (*Explain to the students, the water will go back into the raisins, softening them almost like a grape.*)

Apply:

How can you tell the difference between a raisin and a grape?

Shape: a grape is plump and round; a raisin is small and wrinkled.

Taste: A grape is tart, soft, and juicy, like a grape! A raisin is sweet and chewy, like a raisin!

Raise your hand if you like grapes. Why do you like grapes? How many of you like raisins? Why do you like raisins?

When might you eat raisins? (*for breakfast, lunch, snack, in a salad, anytime*) There are many ways to eat raisins. Raise your hand if you have eaten raisins in any of the following ways:

Plain, right out of the box

Oatmeal-raisin cookies

In cereal like “Raisin Bran”

In trail mix with other dried fruits and nuts

In the recipe: “Ants on a Log” where you spread peanut butter on a stalk of celery and add the “ants”

(raisins) on top of the peanut butter and celery “log.”

In rice pudding

In salads like “Carrot and Raisin” salad



Tasting Opportunity

Have students wash their hands. Distribute raisins for the students to sample. They can then put an “X” through the bingo square of the fruit that they sampled.

How would you get raisins ready to eat as a snack?

Raisins- **Eat. (How easy is that?)**

On the back of the Pick a **better** snack™ & **Act** bingo card for each month, there is information for their parents and grandparents. Ask students to take the bingo card home and ask their family to pick out a snack idea to try at home.

Extend the Activity



Art, Music & PE

Place construction paper, scissors, and glue or glue sticks in a learning center. Encourage the students to make their own snowman similar to Sadie’s using a variety of fruits and vegetables to make the snowman’s face. (*See Language Arts/Reading*)



Language Arts & Reading

Read Sadie and the Snowman by Allen Morgan. Have the students listen for how Sadie used raisins. (*Available on audio tape, too*)



Math

With the students, count the number of raisins (by 2’s, 5’s, 10’s) in a miniature ½ ounce box of raisins.

How many years ago did the farmer bring monkeys from Panama to pick plums? How many groups of monkeys picked plums? (*See Background section of this lesson*)



Science & Health

Place some grapes on a spot on your windowsill, and chart how long it takes for the grapes to dehydrate and becomes raisins. (*Some rooms are sunnier than others, so times may vary.*)



Social Studies

Visit <http://www.sunmaid.com>.

Go to the Healthy Living tab and explore the History of Raisins and Dried Fruit link.