Foods for Gut Health

THE GUT'S GREATER GOOD

"Listen to your gut" is a popular piece of advice, and now the recommendation to "take care of your gut" is trending, too. That's because the health of your gut – also known as your gastrointestinal system – is dependent on the levels and types of bacteria it contains. Aside from the things a person may not be able to control, like family genes, environment and medications, a major contributor to the makeup of each of our microbiomes is the **food we eat**.

HEALTHY BACTERIA:

A gut populated with healthy bacteria is important for many of the body's other functions. Diets higher in fibre increase the diversity of the bacteria that live in the gut.[1]

GUT MICROBIOME:

The bacteria and microbes that live within the gastrointestinal tract.

Research shows a healthy gut microbiome can impact cognition, mental health, heart health, weight management, diabetes development, bone health, digestive health, immune health, nutrient status and more.[2]

KNOW THESE TERMS

PROBIOTICS: Live beneficial bacteria that provide health benefits when given in adequate amounts.

PREBIOTICS: Fiber that acts as food for beneficial gut bacteria and helps maintain a healthy microbiome.

SOLUBLE FIBRE: Fibre that slows digestion and helps you feel more full.

INSOLUBLE FIBRE: Fibre that helps keep things moving through the digestive tract.

POLYPHENOLS: A type of antioxidant that protects the cells against damage.[3]

SORBITOL: A naturally occurring sugar alcohol that acts as a prebiotic.

Every person's gut microbiome is unique. Nutrients in the foods we eat can influence the health of our gut bacteria. Fermented foods, such as yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi, contain bacteria that can help improve digestive health.[4]

Fibre from plant-based foods can also help support digestive health. Plant-based foods include whole grains, beans, vegetables and fruits such as prunes. **Polyphenols** and **sorbitol** in plant-based foods can also play a role in supporting gut health.[5,6]

CALIFORNIA PRUNES & THE GUT

Prunes are often underestimated. Known for their role in short-term digestive health, including relieving constipation, prunes are also good for gut health for several reasons:

1. Prunes are a whole food that's a good source of both soluble and insoluble fibre.
2. Prunes contain prebiotics, so eating them regularly promotes longer-term gut health by helping probiotics grow in the gut.
3. Prunes contain higher levels of polyphenols than most other fruits.[7]
4. Prunes naturally contain sorbitol, which is a prebiotic that feeds those hungry probiotics.
5. Prunes have a unique combination of nutrients that researchers believe work together like a team to aid in digestion and improve the gut microbiome.

california™ prunes
Prunes. For life.

CALIFORNIA PRUNES: DELICIOUS & SURPRISINGLY VERSATILE

Prunes are often underestimated. California grows the best prunes in the world, and this dried fruit is always in season.

They're delightfully delicious, versatile and nutritious with several health benefits. Prunes' positive impact on gut health may help explain why studies have tied them to bone density, heart health, weight management and more. Prunes are also a versatile ingredient in cooking and baking. They can add complexity and subtle sweetness to savoury dishes. They can be used whole, diced, pureed or as juice. They can add moisture, colour and depth of flavour — and they can decrease sugar and fat. Prunes can also replace unwanted or unavailable ingredients such as eggs.

Try the delicious recipe below, and for more recipes and cooking tips, visit californiaprunes.ca

Among the many foods marketed these days as "good for the gut," California Prunes are one of the originals. Eating them regularly can be a simple, delicious, versatile and nutritious way to help support a healthy gut microbiome.

PRUNE NUTRITION

A serving of prunes is 40 g and about 5 prunes.
For 100 calories, a serving of prunes provides:

3 g fibre (11% Daily Value)	**24 ug vitamin K** (20% Daily Value)	**300 mg potassium** (9% Daily Value)

Prunes are also a source of copper, manganese and vitamin B6

RECIPE:

Kristy Del Coro's Farro Salad

Kristy Del Coro is a nutritionist, consultant, recipe developer and food writer. Tossed together with a zesty herb dressing, this grain-based salad makes for a tasty make-ahead side dish or lunch – and California Prunes add luxurious texture and a jammy, subtle sweetness. Amp up the protein further by adding grilled chicken, shrimp or crumbled feta.

PREP & COOK TIME: 35 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

2 c. cooked pearled farro
½ c. diced pitted California prunes
½ c. diced fennel
½ c. thinly sliced radicchio
¼ c. dry-roasted, shelled pistachios
¼ c. freshly squeezed orange juice
¼ c. chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp. chopped fresh mint leaves
2 tbsp. minced shallots
1 tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 tsp. honey
½ tsp. fine sea salt
¼ c. avocado oil or other neutral oil of choice
Garnish: freshly grated orange zest

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a medium bowl, combine farro, prunes, fennel, radicchio and pistachios. Stir to combine.

In a separate small bowl, whisk together orange juice, parsley, mint, shallots, vinegar, honey and salt. Gradually pour in avocado oil, while whisking, until emulsified. Pour vinaigrette over farro salad and gently toss until evenly coated. If adding protein or feta, place atop bowl, garnish with lemon zest and enjoy!

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[4] Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School. "Fermented foods can add depth to your diet." *STAYING HEALTHY,* https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/fermented-foods-can-add-depth-to-your-diet. Accessed 3/11/2024.
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