



Prunes It's a Movement MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:00] We're almost live at the Agriculture Department's farmers market on the Mall in Washington, D.C., we're in the VegU-cation Tent. We've got a visiting VegU-cator here, Courtney Ferris. Courtney, I want you to repeat, if you will, what you said to me earlier before we went on the air about your dietary upbringing.

Courtney Ferris [00:00:16] All my life, I've been eating prunes since I was very little.

Gary Crawford [00:00:18] Prunes, now is that bragging or is that confessing? You know, I'm not sure which. Actually, I am, it's neither. It's just a statement of fact based on your own history back in California, right?

Courtney Ferris [00:00:29] Yeah, exactly. My dad is that third generation farmer, and he just really enjoyed farming prunes.

Gary Crawford [00:00:36] Ahh farming prunes. That explains the fact that you, Courtney, now work for the California Prune Board. And while you're here in Washington lecturing at VegU, all about prunes, no giggling allowed, this is serious. Now, Courtney, your kind of fighting an uphill battle, I think, to try to get more Americans to eat prunes or drink prune juice. So, we understand U.S. consumption has been flat for a little while. You know, 40 years.

Courtney Ferris [00:00:57] Yeah, unfortunately.

Gary Crawford [00:00:59] Hasn't been due to lack of effort either. Now prunes, even though they're really dried plums, they just have that stigma about their laxative qualities and that only older people eat them, that they're wrinkly. So, Courtney, do you think it's the name prunes, that's the problem?

Courtney Ferris [00:01:13] So it's interesting you asked that. They were always prunes. And then in 2006, we did a rebranding to try and make them dried plums. We thought that would appeal to more audiences. And then just this past spring, actually, they went back to California prunes.

Gary Crawford [00:01:26] So the name change didn't do it. So, it's back to prunes again.

Courtney Ferris [00:01:30] They've always been prunes, they're always going to be prunes. And dried plum is a prune. Yeah.

Gary Crawford [00:01:35] So it's not a new wrinkle.

Courtney Ferris [00:01:36] Yes, exactly.

Gary Crawford [00:01:38] So it's back to the old name. And you guys are pursuing every avenue to build demand.

Courtney Ferris [00:01:43] Yes, exactly.

Gary Crawford [00:01:43] Now, everybody knows the intestinal benefits, but nutritionally, what else is in there?

Courtney Ferris [00:01:49] New research is showing that California prunes are great for bone health, particularly in postmenopausal women. Looks like five to six prunes a day. This is what daily recommended, serving as great for bone health.

Gary Crawford [00:02:02] Woah, woah, woah 5 or 6 a day, won't that be a shock to the digestive system?

Courtney Ferris [00:02:06] That's why I would start low. So, start with one prune and see how it affects you, and then start with two and maybe do that for a few days. But really, it's dependent on each person.

Gary Crawford [00:02:12] But the big push, from what I've seen seems to be developing recipes that you could use prunes in some form or other instead of some other ingredients.

Courtney Ferris [00:02:20] We have a huge team working out recipe development.

Gary Crawford [00:02:22] Stay tuned. We'll tell you how to find some of those recipes. But Courtney, do you have any proof jokes to give us? No.

Courtney Ferris [00:02:29] I wish I did.

Gary Crawford [00:02:29] Oh, I'll give you one free. Why did the boy go out with a prune? Because he couldn't get a date. How was that prune, joke?

Courtney Ferris [00:02:36] The pits.

Gary Crawford [00:02:37] I agree. No, seriously, Courtney, you've got your eight-week-old baby daughter, Caroline out here.

Courtney Ferris [00:02:42] She's the youngest prune enthusiast or soon will be in the next few months when we give her a little prune baby food.

Gary Crawford [00:02:47] Yeah won't be able to escape it. To find a bunch of recipes for prunes, go online to Californiaprunes.org, Californiaprunes.org in Washington, Gary Crawford for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.