

# Holiday Cooking

## A Plum Perfect Holiday Dressing

(NAPSA)—It happens every year, all across America. The holiday traditionalists square off with the innovators. On one side of the table, the former insist on time-honored family recipes. Meanwhile, the latter want something a little different, just this once. Sound familiar?

Perhaps this year, it's time for a compromise—like a classic dressing with a nontraditional twist—dried plums. They'll add a touch of moisture and a hint of sweetness that go perfectly with the sweet-savory palate and, remarkably, they can even give a boost to other ingredients you combine them with.

"I use California Dried Plums in my cooking all the time, because they add moisture and flavor-enhancing benefits," said Chef Sean O'Brien of San Francisco's renowned Myth Restaurant. "There are natural elements in dried plums which help heighten the flavors of other ingredients in a recipe—whether it's a dessert or something savory."

It's the fiber and sorbitol, a sugar alcohol, in dried plums that give them their unique moisture-enhancing qualities. Chefs, bakers and dietitians often use them to make extra-lean meat, poultry and healthier baked goods taste richer and moister.

Food manufacturers, too, are increasingly turning to dried plum purée as a natural fat replacement, sweetener and coloring agent that can stand in for the corn syrup solids and caramel color often added to processed foods.

In addition to providing benefits as a cooking or baking ingredient, dried plums are conveniently ready-to-eat right from the pack-



**Plum Perfect—California Dried Plums are the chef's secret for moist, flavorful cooking.**

age as a healthful snack. Packed with important vitamins, minerals and antioxidant power, they can help you achieve and maintain good digestive health—and that may mean better health overall.

And as for holiday dressings, "dried plums will make a dramatic difference in both moisture and flavor," O'Brien said. "No more bland, bone-dry stuffing."

And no more debating over tradition. This holiday season, add some chopped dried plums to that favorite family dressing, or try this easy recipe. Either way, you'll have something both culinary conservatives and progressives can agree on—moist, sweet, plum perfect dressing.

### **California Dried Plum and Chestnut**

#### **Holiday Dressing**

**Prep time: 20 minutes**

**Cook time: 50 minutes**

- 1 (1-pound) loaf rustic multigrain bread**
- 4 tablespoons butter or vegetable oil**

- 1 cup diced celery**
- 1 cup diced onions**
- 1 tablespoon crushed fennel seed**
- 2 cups coarsely chopped pitted California Dried Plums**
- 1½ cups coarsely chopped cooked chestnuts\***
- ½ cup chopped parsley**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper**
- 4 cups turkey or fat-free low sodium chicken broth**
- 2 eggs (optional)**

Heat oven to 400°F. Cut crust from bread and discard. Cut bread into large pieces; pulse in food processor to coarse crumbs. In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add celery, onions and fennel seed. Cook, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes or until vegetables are soft. In large bowl, combine bread crumbs, vegetables, dried plums, chestnuts, parsley, salt and pepper. Add broth and mix gently but thoroughly. (If using eggs, whisk with broth before adding to rest of ingredients.) Transfer to 2-quart shallow oven-proof baking dish; cover loosely with buttered sheet of foil, buttered side down. Bake 30 minutes; remove foil and bake 15 to 20 minutes more or until top is browned.

**Yield: 8 servings (1 cup/serving).**

\*Cooked chestnuts are available canned, bottled or vacuum-packed. Be sure to purchase unsweetened chestnuts.

For more recipes featuring California Dried Plums, please visit [www.californiadriedplums.org](http://www.californiadriedplums.org).