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Nebraska Extension – Buffalo County
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Wonderful Plums

Plums are a stone fruit the same as peaches, nectarines, and apricots. They are all considered "drupes," fruits that have a hard-stone pit surrounding their seeds. When plums are dried, they become the fruit known as prunes. Plums can be large or small, with red, purple, green, yellow, or orange skin, and pink, yellow, or orange flesh. There are more than 2,000 varieties grown all over the world.

Plums are a good source of vitamin C. They also contain vitamin A, vitamin K, potassium, phosphorous, magnesium, and fiber. They are rich in antioxidants, which are helpful for reducing inflammation and protecting cells from damage by free radicals.

When choosing plums for eating, look for firm plums with smooth skins that have a slight "give" when gently squeezed. Avoid bruises and soft spots. They should feel heavy for their size. The silvery-gray film on a plum's skin is natural and an indicator of ripeness.

Go for firm-ripe plums for baking. They should smell fragrant and be easy to slice. During baking the plums will become tender without losing their shape or having too much juice.

To ripen plums quickly, place in a paper bag at room temperature overnight or up to 3 days. Ripe plums can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-4 days. They can also be frozen, just remove the pit before freezing.

When preparing plums for eating or baking, rinse under cool running water while rubbing the skin gently. To remove the pit, start at the stem end of the plum and following the natural indentation, use a sharp paring knife to cut through the flesh to the pit, running the knife all the way around the plum. Gently twist the plum halves in opposite directions until one half comes

free of the pit. Carefully remove the pit by prying up the pointed end with a spoon.

Plums are great raw, roasted, poached, grilled, or sautéed. Here are some tasty ideas to try:

- Slice plums into salads.
- Add a slice of plum to ice water.
- Top your morning yogurt or granola with them.
- Add plums to smoothies.
- Bake into a tart.
- Roast duck breasts with a plum glaze.

For more information about plums, contact Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County, 1400 East 34th Street, Kearney, NE 68847 or call (308) 236-1235.