

DRIED FRUITS

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DRIED FRUITS FROM TURKEY

Turkey is one of the unique countries in the world for agricultural production and the Turkey's matchless superiority with respect to agricultural production allows her to produce many agricultural products. Except for some tropical products, almost every kind of agricultural product can be produced on a large scale in Turkey. Dried fruits are one of Turkey's major agricultural sectors and Turkey is the most important country in the world with respect to both the production and export of dried fruits. Turkish dried fruits' production and exports are extremely high and dominate world markets. Among the dried fruits produced in Turkey, raisins (sultanas), dried apricots and dried figs have the lion's share. Because of their major importance for agricultural exports, they are regarded as traditional Turkish agricultural export items. Turkey also produces and exports other kinds of dried fruits such as prunes, currants, dried apples, dried pears, dried mulberries, dried peaches etc.

Dried Fruits, Nutrition and Health

Grapes, figs and apricots are miracles from the standpoint of their composition and have been accepted as sacred fruits throughout history. Dried fruits are called nature's candy and they are one of the most nutritious fruits in the world. They are cholesterol-free, rich in vitamins and minerals, and totally fat-free. Dried fruits are a good source of fiber and also rich in antioxidants.

Dried fruits are invaluable for human health and provide consumers many advantages with respect to nourishment. Dried fruits, with many of the major vitamins and minerals in their composition, are found to be useful in many functions of the human body, some of which are as follows:

- Regulation of the functioning of the brain, giving energy and helping to release stress,
- helping in the recovery of the liver, known to be the most important organ for storage and waste disposal in the body,
- Playing an important role in keeping the bones and teeth healthier and stronger,
- Prevention of anemia by increasing blood production,
- In addition to playing an important role in the therapy of ulcers, they also prevent the formation of stomach and intestinal ulcers,
- Decreasing the formation of kidney stones,
- Providing a regulatory role in the reproduction system,
- Acting as a cancer preventative,
- Making cardiac muscles stronger and the functioning of the heart more regular.
- Helping child growth, curing diseases with inflammation and fever, as well as kidney and liver diseases,
- Treating skin pigmentation diseases.

Consumption Forms of Dried Fruits

Dried fruits are used in a wide range of food sectors as well as being consumed as a snack food. Some consumption forms of dried fruits are as follows:

Raisins (Sultanas)

Raisins are an indispensable ingredient in breads, cakes, cookies, pies, tarts and different pastries in the bakery sector. They are an excellent addition to a wide range of candies, puddings and other wonderful confectioneries. They are mixed or added to many cereals and cereal-based products like muesli logs, fruit-filled cereals, nuggets and extruded breakfast cereals. They are also delicious sweeteners and texturizers in different types of yogurt, ice creams and even in some types of cheese.

Dried Apricots

Dried apricots are mostly consumed directly as a snack after being graded and may be mixed with other fruits. It is also used in bakery products, in the production of chocolate and candies, and as an ingredient in the preparation of some special sweets, like paste. The juice made from dried fruits by boiling them in water can also be consumed as refreshment after cooling the juice.

Dried Figs

Dried figs are consumed in international cuisines in many different forms including in pies, puddings, cakes, bread or other bakery products after stewing or being cooked; in jams, marmalades or in many sugar and confectionery products as a delicious ingredient. Dried figs have become an increasingly important due to their advantages with both industrial users and individual consumers such as longer shelf life, more concentrated taste, higher economic value and ease of use in almost all of the above mentioned areas of consumption compared to their use in fresh form.

PRODUCTION

RAISINS (Sultanas)

Turkey has 1200 different types of grapes and has been among the five major producers of grapes throughout the world with an annual average production of about 3.5 million tons. Among these varieties, seedless "Yuvarlak and Sultani" are the main varieties used for raisins. Seedless raisins are grown especially in the Aegean Region of Turkey, which is blessed with some of the most fertile land in the world, plenty of sunshine and abundant water supplies.

The original name of the famous seedless Turkish raisins, “Sultana, Sultanna, Sultanine”, comes from the fact that they were served at the Ottoman Sultans’ magnificent tables during the times of the Ottoman Empire.

About 60 % of the total production in this region is seedless. Depending on foreign demand, the tendency in Turkey is towards more production without reducing quality. This has been realized both by increasing viticulture areas throughout the country and utilizing modern viticulture techniques to increase the yield. Raisin production in Turkey totalled 310 thousand tons in 2008, and with this figure Turkey accounts for nearly 30% of total world raisin production.

Turkish Raisin Production (Quantity: Ton)

Years	Quantity
2000	255 000
2001	255 000
2002	200 000
2003	215 000
2004	280 000
2005	250 000
2006	274 000
2007	240 000
2008	310 000
2009*	280 000

Source: International Nut Council (INC)

* Provisional

DRIED APRICOTS

Turkey is at the top of the fresh and dried apricot producing countries with approximately 560 thousand tons of fresh and more than 100 thousand tons of dried apricot production in 2008. Turkey alone meets more than 20 % of the fresh apricot production and more than 80 % of the dried apricot production in the world.

Turkish Dried Apricot Production (Quantity: Ton)

Year	Quantity
2000	88.000
2001	98.000
2002	63.000
2003	94.000
2004	80.500
2005	139.000
2006	90.000
2007	98.000
2008	120.000
2009*	100.000

Source: International Nut Council (INC)

* Provisional

Apricot cultivation, which is spread across most of the agricultural regions of Turkey, finds its best environment in the Central Eastern Anatolian Region where nearly half of the crops are produced.

Due to the ecology of the province, apricots from Malatya have gained economic value in the form of dried apricots for years. Almost all of the fresh crop in this district is subject to the drying process and at least 90-95 % of the dried apricots produced, is exported.

The most important varieties, according to the quantity produced, are HACIHALILOĞLU, SOĞANCI, KABAASI and ÇATALOĞLU.

DRIED FIGS

Although fig production may show variations between 45-60 thousand tons according to annual climatic conditions, Turkey ranks as the world's largest supplier of fresh and dried figs. Turkey realizes 25 % of the world's fresh fig production and over half of the world's dried fig production.

Turkish Dried Fig Production (Quantity: Ton)

Year	Quantity
2004	55.631
2005	56.327
2006	60.393
2007	43.500
2008	42.500
2009*	50.000

Source: International Nut Council (INC)

* Provisional

Although different types of fig varieties are grown throughout Turkey, the "Sari Iop" variety with its large size, sweet, fleshy, light colored character and soft skin is the main variety for dried figs. This variety, which is preferred by most of the world's countries for its quality, is produced only in the river basins of the Big and Small Menderes Rivers in the Aegean Region.

Fig production is realized principally in the Aydin and Izmir provinces over a large area. This is a family business, as it requires an intensive human labor in the field when collecting the figs from trees, selecting, sorting, screening and further processing the figs into different forms.

After processing, figs acquire export names such as layer, protoben, pulled, lerida, locum, garland, macaroni, baglama, cukulata, and umbrella based on their shapes.

Drying improves both storage life and the food value of the fig. Fresh figs contain some 80% water and 12% sugar, however, when dried, the sugar content rises to 50%.

Turkish dried fruits are grown under natural conditions, harvested and dried under controlled conditions. They are graded, stored and packaged and packed in hygienic conditions following the strict rules of internationally accepted quality control systems. Regarding the safety of production, before being processed in the factories dried fruits are subject only to scientific and international treatments.

In Turkey, organic farming, which started in 1985, has shown a tremendous progress and the dried fruits sector was the pioneer. Dried fruits still hold an important share among organic agricultural products and today 45% of the organic farmers are in the dried fruit business. Nearly 15% of dried apricots, more than 5% of raisins and around 20% of dried figs are produced by organic methods. The demand for organic fruits comes primarily from abroad (especially the EU and other western countries) and organic production is increasing in Turkey based on the demand of both domestic and foreign markets.

EXPORTS

Dried apricots are among Turkey's traditional agricultural export products. Turkey is the most important dried fruit exporter in the world. Nearly 15% of world dried fruit exports come from Turkey. The export figures of dried fruits both in terms of quantity and value, generally has shown an upward trend annually.

Turkish Dried Fruit Exports (Q: Ton, V: US\$ 1.000)

	2007		2008		2009	
	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V
RAISINS & SULTANAS	240.599	316.827	199.234	349.539	266.730	407.512
DRIED APRICOTS	105.031	236.021	98.178	313.496	101.234	278.866
DRIED FIGS	40.101	150.528	33.123	162.908	38.820	150.828

Source: Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade

Turkey exports dried fruits to the five continents of the world and to more than 100 countries. Over 60% of the exports are directed to European Union Countries. 46% of exports were directed to 4 countries, namely UK, Germany France and the Netherlands in 2008. Apart from the EU countries, the Russian Federation, the USA, Australia and Canada are the other important destinations for Turkish dried fruits.

Major Export Destinations for Sultanas (Quantity: Ton Value: US\$ 1.000)

ÜLKELER	2007		2008		2009	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
The UK	63.301	84.652	47.942	85.297	57.231	89.804
Germany	40.314	52.635	30.165	52.289	44.581	67.719
The Netherlands	32.413	42.065	25.919	45.816	33.703	51.913
Italy	18.964	26.830	16.097	28.732	16.561	28.175
France	16.499	21.213	14.000	24.313	15.974	24.669
Australia	16.960	20.576	13.146	23.419	15.963	23.203
Belgium	9.474	12.401	7.086	12.433	10.729	16.268
Canada	5.901	7.332	5.775	9.691	9.321	13.692
Russian Fed.	3.245	4.631	3.666	6.348	6.517	9.442
New Zealand	4.254	5.461	4.065	7.419	4.700	7.349
Ireland	5.872	7.118	5.080	8.749	4.607	6.589
Spain	3.430	4.334	2.906	5.109	3.754	5.464
Algeria	593	766	493	848	3.766	5.340
Ukraine	88	132	1.461	1.951	4.742	5.134
Poland	581	807	2.225	3.499	3.914	5.029
Morocco	38	47	1.023	1.570	3.120	4.993
Austria	1.229	1.782	1.480	2.618	2.728	4.000
Switzerland	2.277	3.335	2.123	4.070	2.027	3.588
Egypt	129	155	467	771	2.318	3.385
Greece	2.615	3.467	2.099	3.407	1.929	3.013
Japan	2.169	3.138	1.685	3.061	1.475	2.748
South African Rep.	0	0	66	122	1.477	2.094
Lithuania	0	0	375	560	1.232	1.609
Romania	324	459	869	1.308	1.195	1.589
Sweden	768	1.350	635	1.613	529	1.366
Portugal	1.016	1.395	1.209	1.945	816	1.356
Denmark	841	1.277	476	902	744	1.337
China	1.420	2.081	1.223	2.383	625	1.153
Hungary	39	53	243	394	802	1.088
Jamaica	906	1.199	660	1.205	625	1.009
Other	4.939	6.137	4.577	7.697	9.024	13.392
Total	240.599	316.827	199.234	349.539	266.730	407.512

Source: Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade

Turkish dried figs are the favorite items for Christmas in the Christian world. Also, they are keenly sought after by Moslems especially during Ramadan as well as during the periods of traditional American and Jewish holidays such as Succoth, Hanukkah and Passover.

Major Export Destinations for Dried Apricots (Quantity ton, Value: US\$ 1.000)

ÜLKELER	2007		2008		2009	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
The USA	15.514	39.446	14.248	47.852	14.772	42.057
Russian Fed.	20.210	29.545	16.797	42.943	14.079	31.958
Germany	8.451	23.407	7.547	27.122	8.588	28.143
The UK	9.380	22.370	8.926	28.674	8.211	23.568
France	6.821	19.467	7.342	27.643	6.890	23.069
Australia	4.307	10.512	5.136	17.114	5.137	14.827
The Netherlands	2.386	6.231	2.430	8.166	2.997	8.477
Brazil	2.146	6.041	1.902	6.944	2.745	7.678
Canada	2.274	5.815	2.049	7.190	2.659	7.669
Ukraine	5.711	6.538	5.345	10.459	3.859	6.217
Egypt	1.341	2.378	1.688	5.062	2.302	5.945
Poland	2.396	5.816	1.850	6.180	1.988	5.433
Spain	1.722	4.558	1.699	6.165	1.633	4.910
Israel	1.478	3.969	1.465	5.031	1.671	4.882
Italy	1.571	4.596	1.455	5.461	1.531	4.780
Algeria	877	1.664	715	2.427	1.619	4.159
New Zealand	1.272	3.125	1.227	4.152	1.244	3.506
Switzerland	881	2.678	833	3.270	906	3.089
Denmark	422	1.164	518	1.915	817	2.736
Sweden	660	1.942	657	2.656	736	2.603
Iraq	599	684	310	730	1.543	2.303
Lithuania	1.037	1.769	869	2.471	925	2.035
Greece	927	2.615	720	2.758	642	1.950
Morocco	255	596	620	2.045	707	1.885
Latvia	919	1.868	1.139	3.483	746	1.827
Azerbaijan	866	951	812	1.179	916	1.760
UAE	454	1.144	385	1.417	557	1.628
Slovakia	544	1.741	904	3.699	420	1.554
Czech Rep.	728	1.360	671	1.962	602	1.454
Japan	416	1.185	382	1.402	412	1.454
Saudi Arabia	458	1.059	273	997	468	1.312
Belgium	398	1.065	368	1.329	321	1.016
Other	7.609	18.724	6.896	23.599	8.592	22.981
Total	105.031	236.021	98.178	313.496	101.234	278.866

Source: Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade

It is expected that, as their nutritional and medicinal value is understood, Turkish dried fruit exports will hopefully increase further in the future.

Before exportation dried fruits go through sophisticated laser sorters to avoid any foreign elements. Table picking is performed by skilled quality control technicians depending on buyers' specifications. Strict standards are applied to ensure each

box of dried fruits is free of mold, pests and other imperfections. Thus, Turkish dried fruits, today, are known for supreme quality and utmost cleanliness in international markets.

Major Export Destinations for Dried Figs (Quantity: Ton, Value: US\$ 1.000)

ÜLKELER	2007		2008		2009	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
France	6.541	24.460	6.472	35.265	6.687	29.600
Germany	7.079	29.069	5.999	30.884	6.628	28.137
Italy	2.982	14.168	2.689	13.666	3.506	14.070
Switzerland	1.855	9.503	1.634	9.619	1.611	7.969
Russian Fed.	3.012	6.685	1.890	5.638	2.950	7.631
The Netherlands	1.462	5.321	1.002	4.458	1.405	4.984
Spain	1.229	5.781	1.041	5.017	1.196	4.715
Israel	795	3.393	886	5.064	922	4.231
USA	1.027	3.484	900	4.520	1.030	3.972
Switzerland	1.229	5.821	807	4.631	764	3.406
England	1.896	5.818	1.118	5.858	754	3.028
Canada	521	1.959	449	2.096	810	2.779
Austria	419	1.815	483	2.127	682	2.595
Japan	658	2.675	383	2.604	483	2.594
Belgium	394	1.572	329	1.822	600	2.481
Australia	1.123	3.933	460	2.509	576	2.458
Brazil	680	1.748	436	1.803	813	2.180
Denmark	370	1.483	394	2.155	392	2.041
Egypt	534	1.045	149	717	457	1.555
Portugal	349	1.589	414	1.987	299	1.236
UAE	157	655	132	942	246	1.225
Slovakia	388	1.824	333	1.799	332	1.194
Serbia	371	1.030	331	775	569	1.179
Ukraine	569	1.082	527	1.320	571	1.132
Poland	573	1.943	388	1.568	323	1.099
Romania	484	1.486	591	2.008	372	1.091
Hungary	290	1.190	344	1.331	288	981
Others	3.115	9.993	2.543	10.728	3.554	11.262
Total	40.101	150.528	33.123	162.908	38.820	150.828

Source: Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade

Today, most of the dried fruits exporter companies have been awarded the ISO and HACCP system certificates.

In addition, the province of Izmir, located on the Aegean region, is the main export area for Turkish dried fruits, in which the largest dried fruit processing and exporting companies in Turkey have been established.