

DRIED FRUITS

Prepared by
Çağlar GÖKSU
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Export Promotion Center of Turkey

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 exports 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 grated 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 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 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 totaled 274 thousand tons in 2009, and with this figure Turkey accounts for nearly 26% 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	274 000

Source: International Nut Council (INC)

DRIED APRICOTS

Turkey is at the top of the fresh and dried apricot producing countries with approximately 661 thousand tons of fresh and more than 100 thousand tons of dried apricot production in 2009. Turkey alone meets more than 20% of the fresh apricot production and more than 61% 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)

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)

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)

	2008		2009		2010	
	Q	V	Q	V	Q	V
RAISINS & SULTANAS	199.234	349.539	266.685	407.436	212.668	417.598
DRIED APRICOTS	98.178	313.496	101.244	278.880	92.687	350.602
DRIED FIGS	33.123	162.908	38.809	150.894	44.637	157.929

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, especially UK, Germany France and the Netherlands. 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)

	2008		2009		2010	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
The UK	47.942	85.297	57.231	89.793	57.968	113.001
Germany	30.165	52.289	44.560	67.697	36.371	72.650

The Netherlands	25.919	45.816	33.703	51.913	27.898	54.845
Italy	16.097	28.732	16.537	28.124	16.944	33.866
France	14.000	24.313	15.974	24.666	15.119	29.911
Belgium	7.086	12.433	10.729	16.268	10.361	19.978
Australia	13.146	23.419	15.963	23.203	8.733	17.079
Canada	5.775	9.691	9.321	13.692	4.954	9.205
New Zealand	4.065	7.419	4.700	7.349	4.601	8.822
Ireland	5.080	8.749	4.607	6.589	4.620	8.668
Russian Fed.	3.666	6.348	6.517	9.442	3.074	6.761
Spain	2.906	5.109	3.754	5.464	3.398	6.320
Switzerland	2.123	4.070	2.027	3.588	2.104	4.463
Brazil	10	17	30	69	2.257	3.648
Japan	1.685	3.061	1.475	2.748	1.308	2.792
Austria	1.480	2.618	2.728	4.000	1.269	2.349
Poland	2.225	3.499	3.914	5.029	1.223	2.320
Algeria	493	848	3.766	5.340	1.104	1.846
Sweden	635	1.613	529	1.366	447	1.294
China	1.223	2.383	625	1.153	549	1.255
Denmark	476	902	744	1.337	497	1.165
Portugal	1.209	1.945	816	1.356	600	1.165
Egypt	467	771	2.318	3.385	650	1.158
Jamaica	660	1.205	625	1.009	548	1.027
Greece	2.099	3.407	1.929	3.013	500	998
Romania	869	1.308	1.195	1.589	386	753
South African Rep.	66	122	1.477	2.105	352	743
Czech Rep.	159	246	478	619	395	714
Finland	244	431	296	472	356	714
Norway	619	1.054	439	676	238	444

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)

	2008		2009		2010	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
The USA	14.248	47.852	14.772	42.057	13.718	57.468
Russian Fed.	16.797	42.943	14.079	31.958	13.908	43.192
Germany	7.547	27.122	8.588	28.143	8.028	35.180
France	7.342	27.643	6.890	23.069	6.996	29.558

The UK	8.926	28.674	8.211	23.568	7.803	28.311
Australia	5.136	17.114	5.137	14.823	5.107	19.876
Brazil	1.902	6.944	2.745	7.678	3.107	12.041
The Netherlands	2.430	8.166	2.997	8.477	2.493	10.376
Poland	1.850	6.180	1.988	5.433	1.914	7.982
Spain	1.699	6.165	1.633	4.910	1.742	7.649
Italy	1.455	5.461	1.531	4.780	1.599	7.100
Canada	2.049	7.190	2.659	7.669	1.687	6.885
Israel	1.465	5.031	1.671	4.882	1.489	6.096
Egypt	1.688	5.062	2.302	5.945	1.662	5.734
Ukraine	5.345	10.459	3.859	6.217	2.909	5.656
New Zealand	1.227	4.152	1.244	3.506	1.283	4.675
Switzerland	833	3.270	906	3.089	998	4.422
Denmark	518	1.915	817	2.736	719	3.047
Azerbaijan	812	1.179	916	1.760	1.382	2.687
Sweden	657	2.656	736	2.603	605	2.611
Iraq	310	730	1.543	2.303	1.424	2.486
Greece	720	2.758	642	1.950	516	2.323
Lithuania	869	2.471	925	2.035	828	2.312
Slovakia	904	3.699	420	1.554	432	2.077
UAE	385	1.417	557	1.628	443	2.007
Saudi Arabia	273	997	468	1.312	416	1.806
Belgium	368	1.329	321	1.016	478	1.786
Japan	382	1.402	412	1.440	386	1.727
Latvia	1.139	3.483	746	1.827	602	1.616
Czech Rep.	671	1.962	602	1.454	497	1.481

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)

	2008		2009		2010	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
France	6.472	35.265	6.687	29.586	7.554	28.926
Germany	5.999	30.884	6.628	28.174	7.119	27.911

Italy	2.689	13.666	3.506	14.080	3.775	14.342
Switzerland	1.634	9.619	1.611	7.969	1.839	8.139
Russian Fed.	1.890	5.638	2.950	7.632	3.190	7.693
USA	900	4.520	1.030	3.972	1.442	5.267
The Netherlands	1.002	4.458	1.405	4.984	1.671	5.081
Israel	886	5.064	922	4.231	1.195	4.658
Spain	1.041	5.017	1.196	4.715	1.204	4.291
Australia	460	2.509	576	2.458	852	3.311
Egypt	149	717	460	1.568	1.015	3.162
Canada	449	2.096	810	2.778	854	2.899
Austria	483	2.127	682	2.595	783	2.842
Sweden	807	4.631	764	3.406	635	2.702
The UK	1.118	5.858	754	3.028	712	2.679
Japan	383	2.604	483	2.594	498	2.425
Vietnam	0	0	0	0	765	2.181
Belgium	329	1.822	600	2.481	632	2.034
Brazil	436	1.803	813	2.180	750	1.923
UAE	132	942	246	1.225	405	1.626
Slovakia	333	1.799	332	1.194	487	1.615
Hong Kong	15	105	69	292	347	1.277
Denmark	394	2.155	392	2.041	290	1.219
Poland	388	1.568	323	1.099	370	1.212
Romania	591	2.008	372	1.091	369	1.094
Portugal	414	1.987	299	1.236	320	1.062
Saudi Arabia	6	34	34	141	300	1.060
Serbia	331	775	569	1.179	480	920
Morocco	65	303	100	419	242	917
Ukraine	527	1.320	571	1.132	486	879

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.