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Cranberries

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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Utah Local Fresh Season: Cranberries are not grown in Utah because they require a long growing season and large amounts of water.

Availability: The peak harvest season for fresh cranberries is October through December. Once purchased, cranberries can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks. Sometimes fresh cranberries can be found in the freezer section near the end of their season. Cranberry juice, sauce and dried cranberries can be found in grocery stores year round.

Eating: Drinking cranberry juice is the most common form of consumption. However, during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, cranberries are often found in stuffing, dressing, relishes, and of course, cranberry sauce.

Selecting: Choose fresh cranberries that are full, plump, firm and dark red or yellowish-red; avoid cranberries that look shriveled or bruised.

Cleaning and Preparing: Shortly before use, rinse fresh or frozen cranberries and throw out any that are shriveled or bruised. Do not rinse before freezing. There is no need to clean dried cranberries.

Storing: Cranberries freeze wonderfully. Simply place in an air-tight freezer bag, and they will last almost a year. Fresh cranberries should be stored in the refrigerator, preferably in a crisper for about 3 to 4 weeks.

Cooking: There is no need to thaw frozen cranberries before adding to a recipe, just rinse and add. When cooking, cook just until the cranberries pop; further cooking will result in a more bitter taste. Raw cranberries are tart and bland-tasting, but using them fresh or dried adds color and nutrition to many recipes.

Cranberries are versatile and can be combined with many other flavors. Try mixing cranberry juice with other juices such as apple, orange or grape. Dried cranberries can be used in place of raisins, added to nuts, granola, or oatmeal. Fresh or dried cranberries work well in quick breads such as muffins and sweat breads and yeast breads.

Nutrition Highlights: Early sailors used to take cranberries on long journeys to prevent scurvy, because they contain such high amounts of Vitamin C. Cranberries also contain antioxidants and bacteria-blocking compounds which help prevent urinary tract infections, ulcers, and gum disease

Preserving: Fresh cranberries can be used to make such novel canned items as: Spicy Cranberry Salsa, Cranberry Orange Chutney and Cranberry Conserve.¹ Cranberries can also be dehydrated at home. See reference on drying fruit for more details.

¹ Visit <http://homefoodpreservation.com> or <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/nchfp/factsheets.html> for recipes and instructions.

Cranberry Sweet Potato Bread

from the American Institute for Cancer Research
www.aicr.org

Canola oil spray
2 large eggs
3/4 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
1/3 cup canola oil
1 cup mashed sweet potatoes, fresh baked or canned without syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon orange extract
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup whole-wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon allspice or mace (optional)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup chopped dried unsweetened cranberries

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a standard loaf pan (8x4 or 9x5-inch) with canola spray and set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk eggs, sugar, oil, sweet potatoes and extracts until well combined. In a large bowl, sift together flour, spices, salt and baking soda. Make a well in the center of the dry mixture and add the wet sweet potato mixture. Mix until just moistened; do not over-mix or beat batter until smooth. Gently stir in cranberries. Bake 50 to 60 minutes, or until tester comes out clean. Remove bread from oven and allow to cool 10 minutes on rack. Remove from pan and set back on rack to completely cool. Seal bread tightly in plastic wrap, then foil. Tightly wrapped in both, it can be refrigerated up to 1 week or frozen up to 1 month.

5. Goodspeed, J. L. 2003. Cranberries 101. Utah State University Press Release.
<http://extension.usu.edu/htm/news/articleID=1858>

Fruit Compote

from the American Institute for Cancer Research
www.aicr.org

This can be served "as is" for family meals; as a topping on angel food, sponge, or pound cake for company; or for those favorite winter comfort foods, rice and tapioca pudding

1/2 cup sugar
1-1/2 cups water
1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and very thinly slivered
1 cup dried fruit mix
2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
1 orange, peeled and sectioned
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and cut into small, thin wedges

In a large saucepan, combine sugar, water and ginger. Bring to a boil over high heat. Add dried fruit mix. Bring back to a boil and immediately reduce heat to low simmer. Cook, uncovered, until fruit is not quite tender, about 5 minutes. Add cranberries and simmer, stirring occasionally, until cranberries pop. Stir in orange and apple. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.

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References

1. *Preserving Food: Drying Fruits and Vegetables*. From the University of Georgia, available at: http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/uga_dry_fruit.pdf
2. *Using and Preserving Cranberries*. From the University of Georgia, available at: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/nchfp/factsheets/ela2cranberries.pdf>
3. <http://whatscookingamerica.net/cranberrytip.htm>
4. The Cranberry Institute: http://www.cranberryinstitute.org/about_cranberry.htm

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