

The Remarkable Antioxidant Power of Cranberries -- and Three No-Cost Cranberry Recipes

by www.SixWise.com

With the holiday season just around the corner, cranberries will start to make their yearly appearance in Thanksgiving and other seasonal meals. Their tangy flavor and bright red color make them a favorite this time of year (it's also when they're most plentiful, as their peak season runs from October to December).

But flavor and color aside, there's another reason to enjoy cranberries (and even make them part of your diet year-round)--they're incredibly nutritious and great for your health.

Cranberries and Your Heart

Studies have found that cranberries reduce the risk of heart disease. Most recently, a study presented at the annual congress of the International Union of Physiological Sciences in March/April 2005 found that pigs with atherosclerosis (a primary cause of heart disease) that received a daily dose of cranberry powder had restored blood vessel health.

Other studies have also found that people who drink cranberry juice have higher levels of good (HDL) cholesterol and may have improved blood vessel function.

Antioxidant Powerhouses

Cranberries are a rich source of antioxidants, according to the Cranberry Institute, a trade association for cranberry growers. In a study funded by the Institute it was found that:

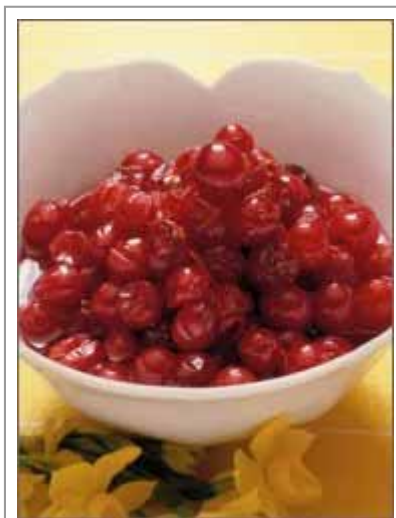
"Cranberries contained the most antioxidant phenols compared to 19 commonly eaten fruits. Cranberries are loaded with antioxidants and should be eaten more often," said study author Joe Vinson, Ph.D., research chemist at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania.

Other studies also rank cranberries as leaders in phenolic compound content. "These antioxidants may play a role in helping to prevent heart disease and certain cancers," Vinson said.

Cranberries Fight Cancer

Certain compounds in cranberries have been found to be toxic to many cancer tumor cell lines, including:

- Lung cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Breast cancer
- Leukemia



Cranberry sauce, the holiday favorite, can, and should, be enjoyed year-round. Don't miss the no-sugar-added cranberry sauce recipe below.

One study, for instance, published in the June 2004 Journal of Nutrition, found that whole cranberries inhibit prostate, skin, lung and brain cancer cells. Experts believe a compound in the whole cranberry (not just the juice) is responsible for this effect.

Unique "Anti-Adhering" Properties

Cranberries possess a unique ability to inhibit bacteria, including E. coli, from adhering to the urinary tract. This is why cranberry juice is often recommended to prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs). Cranberries also contain hippuric acid, which is antibacterial and helpful for warding off UTIs.

But cranberries' anti-adhering properties are helpful for much more than your urinary tract. A study published in the October 2004 issue of the Journal of Science, Food and Agriculture found that an antiviral compound in cranberries called proanthocyanidin A-1 inhibits the herpes virus from attaching to and penetrating the genitals.

Likewise, a compound in cranberries is known to keep Helicobacter pylori, the bacteria that causes most gastric ulcers, from adhering to the cells of the stomach lining.

Cranberries and Your Teeth

A study published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition in 2002 found that compounds in cranberry juice are great for your oral health. They help to dissolve aggregates formed by many oral bacteria while decreasing the level of Streptococcus mutans, the major cause of tooth decay.

Tasty Cranberry Recipes to Try This Season

The best part about all of this is that cranberries are not, like some health foods, hard to swallow. In fact, they add a unique, tart flavor to all kinds of dishes, including these three recipes for everyone's holiday favorite: cranberry sauce. Enjoy!



Whole cranberries can be used in place of other berries in muffins, breads, cereals and more.

Traditional Cranberry Sauce (No Sugar Added!)

Ingredients:

- 1 12oz bag of fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 tsp minced orange zest
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 cup crushed pineapple
- 1/2 cup honey

Directions:

- Bring orange juice, ginger, zest and cinnamon to a boil on high heat in a medium saucepan.
- Rinse cranberries and add once liquid is boiling. Reduce heat to medium and cook uncovered for about 10 minutes.
- Add crushed pineapple and honey. Remove from heat and cool.

[*Recipe from The World's Healthiest Foods*](#)

Spicy Cranberry Sauce

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 orange (including juice and finely chopped rind)
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 piece stick cinnamon
- 4 cups fresh or frozen cranberries

Directions:

- Cook first 4 ingredients together for 5 minutes.
- Add cranberries. Cook until the berries stop popping.
- Cool without stirring.

[*Recipe from The Cranberry Lady*](#)

Cranberry Chutney

Ingredients:

- 2 cups chopped Braeburn apple
- 2 cups whole cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. chopped garlic
- 1 medium red pepper chopped
- 1 Tbsp grated ginger root (or 1 tsp ground ginger)

Directions:

- Combine all in a non-aluminum kettle.
- Simmer until all fruits and vegetables are tender, about 20-30 minutes.
- Stir often to prevent scorching.

[*Recipe from the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association*](#)

Recommended Reading

[The 15 Healthiest Berries You Could Possibly Eat ... Including 7 Most Haven't Heard Of](#)

[The Top 8 Foods People Are Most Sensitive To -- Without Even Knowing It!](#)

Sources

[The World's Healthiest Foods](#)

[The Cranberry Institute](#)

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