

MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

October 2016

Eating Local and Seasonal: Cranberries

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Cranberries provide not only a delicious way to enjoy our Thanksgiving meal, but also an interesting look into Canadian history. Read on to find out how our Indigenous peoples enjoyed cranberries, modern day growing practices, as well as health benefits of this native food.

A Look Into Cranberry History

The cranberry is a fruit native to North America. Before its discovery and commercialization to other continents, our Indigenous peoples enjoyed the fruit in various ways. It could be eaten raw or cooked. Pemmican was a common food made of dried meat, melted fat, and fruit such as cranberries. (Think beef jerky for look and texture. Think granola bar for its role as portable energy.) Pemmican can be eaten as is, added into stew, or fried.



Growing and Harvesting

Cranberries are grown on long and low-running vines in bogs, areas characterized by their soft marshy ground with a specific soil variety and combination that allows cranberries to grow. Cranberries do not grow in water. Photos you may have seen of cranberries floating on water show the harvesting of these fruits. By flooding the bogs with water, it allows the cranberries to float out of the vines for easier harvesting with or without the use of machinery. The cranberries are then transferred for separation from any remaining vines, cleaned, sorted, and packaged for consumers to buy.

In Ontario, cranberries are commercially grown in only three places – Johnston's Cranberry Marsh and Iroquois Cranberry Growers near Bala, as well as Upper Canada Cranberries in Ottawa. Check out their websites for visiting information to see the growing and harvesting process for yourself!



Nutritional Goodness

Historically, cranberries and cranberry products have been used for a wide range of health problems. There is limited evidence to support most of these uses, however, some research shows taking cranberry juice or supplements may help with preventing urinary tract infections. It is important to discuss with your health care provider if you are considering taking cranberry products as there may be medication interactions. Furthermore, little is known about its use in pregnancy or lactation.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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Savory Thyme and Cranberry Wild Rice

Are you looking for a way to enjoy fresh cranberries without all the added sugars that often come with it? Try this delicious side dish that would be a great pairing with any meat dish, particularly that turkey you are planning for your Thanksgiving dinner! It makes an excellent replacement for turkey stuffing and the sugar-filled cranberry sauce!



Makes four ½ to ¾-cup servings

Ingredients:

1 cup	long-grain and wild rice mix
2 cups	no sodium chicken broth
1 tsp	butter
pinch	salt
2 cups	fresh cranberries
2 tbsp.	maple syrup
2 tbsp.	fresh thyme
4 tsp	olive oil

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and set aside.
2. Bring chicken broth to a boil in a saucepan. Once boiling, add rice, butter and salt. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for about 30 minutes or follow package instructions.
3. While rice is cooking, combine cranberries, maple syrup, thyme and olive oil onto baking sheet. Toss to combine evenly. Place in oven and roast for 15 minutes.
4. After both rice and cranberries are finished cooking, transfer into serving bowl and toss to combine evenly.

Nutrition information (Per ½ to ¾ cup):

280 calories, Fat 6 g (9% DV), Carbohydrate 49 g (16% DV), Fibre 2 g (8%), Protein 7 g, Sodium 105 mg (4% DV), Sugars 8 g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 15%, Calcium 6%, Iron 4%