

More about Blueberries!

Blueberries have more to offer than just good looks and good taste. Besides being a good source of Vitamin C and fiber, they have an exciting nutrition story to tell too! Let's check out the facts and look at the nutrition label for blueberries. One cup of blueberries equals one serving. And this amount of blueberries has 15% of the Vitamin C and 14% of the dietary fiber our bodies need every day. That's why blueberries are good sources of these nutrients. Just like all other fruits, blueberries contain no cholesterol or fat and are also low in calories. Blueberries are a great choice when choosing berries this summer!

New studies by USDA scientists and the University of Illinois point to health benefits from eating blueberries that may be as far reaching as preventing cancer and retarding the effects of aging – particularly the loss of memory and motor skills. The focus has been on flavonoids, including anthocyanins, which are responsible for the intense blue color of wild blueberries. USDA scientists Dr. Ronald Prior and Dr. Guohua Cao from the Jean Mayer Human Nutrition Research Centre on Aging at Tufts, recently tested some 40 fruits and vegetables and found that blueberries are number one in antioxidant activity. Antioxidants prevent cancer-causing cell damage and may thwart the effects of some age related diseases. Animals fed a diet of blueberry extract showed fewer changes in brain function due to aging, which could mean improved cognitive and motor skills.

USDA researcher Dr. James Joseph attributes the beneficial effect of blueberries to their high anthocyanin content. Another study conducted by Dr. Mary Ann Smith of the University of Illinois looked at a flavonoid that inhibits an enzyme involved in promoting cancer. Of the fruits tested, blueberries showed the greatest anti-cancer activity.

Some Blueberry Facts (compiled by Devon Craft):

☛ When blueberries are in season, wild bears have been known to travel 10-15 miles per day to sniff out a blueberry patch. These bears will eat nothing except the juicy blueberries when in season.

☛ Cousins of our native North American blueberries are found around the world. Asia, Europe and South America all have berries similar to our blueberry.

☛ American Indians valued the wild blueberry, due to the fact that the blossom end of each blueberry forms a five-point star. They believed the "Great Spirit" sent these star berries to relieve the hunger of children during a famine. Indians also used blueberries for medicinal purposes.

☛ Lewis and Clark wrote of Indians smoking wild blueberries to preserve them for winter use. A meal served to them by the Indians had wild blueberries pounded into the meat - which was then smoked and dried.

☛ The first commercial use of blueberries involved canning them for the military.

Blueberry Cobbler

2/3 cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
3/4 cup water
3 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
1 teaspoon melted butter
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup milk
3 tablespoons melted butter

In a saucepan, combine sugar and cornstarch, stir in water. Bring to a boil; stirring constantly, boil for 1 minute.

Add blueberries.

Pour blueberry mixture into a lightly buttered 1 1/2-quart baking dish or 9-inch pie plate.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and drizzle with 1 teaspoon melted butter.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt.

Pour milk and 3 tablespoons melted butter into a measuring cup; add to flour mixture all at once.

Stir just until mixture is moistened and forms a ball.

Drop spoonfuls onto the blueberries.

Bake at 425° for 25 to 30 minutes, or until lightly browned. Serves 6.



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