



## SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

### Cranberries

**The Folklore:** We serve cranberries at Thanksgiving as part of a tradition that began at the first Thanksgiving dinner, when the Pilgrims reportedly served cranberries brought by Native Americans. The natives taught the colonists how to use the red fruit as a natural dye and about its medicinal value in treating arrow wounds, blood and intestinal ailments and preventing scurvy.

**Nutrition:** One cup of whole cranberries provides 13 milligrams of vitamin C and four grams of fiber. More important are the abundant antioxidants in the form of phytonutrients. Anthocyanins give cranberries their brilliant red color and may play a role in preventing certain cancers and cardiovascular diseases. Proanthocyanidins, the most abundant antioxidant in the berry, are credited with cranberry's most celebrated health benefit—preventing urinary tract infections—but not by acidifying urine, as one thought. Researchers now think proanthocyanidins prevent bacteria like *E. coli* from adhering to the bladder wall and multiplying. Cranberries also provide quercetin, a phytonutrient that has shown anti-cancer promise in animals studies.

Drinking cranberry juice may impart heart-health benefits as well. A preliminary animal study from the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse suggests that cranberry juice may improve blood flow by inhibiting blood clotting and increasing blood vessel diameter. A second study that compared the level of antioxidants in 21 fruits ranked cranberries number one in polyphenols, the phytonutrients credited with the heart-health benefits of grapes.

**The Finer Points:** Because it is so tart, cranberry juice is almost always blended with other juices, like apple or pear, or sweetened with high fructose corn syrup. Read labels and choose a brand with the most cranberry juice you can find.

Cranberries are available fresh only from September to December. They can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. To enjoy year-round, freeze them in their original bag. They will retain their nutrients for up to nine months in the freezer. Frozen berries can be used in any recipe that calls for fresh berries. Thawing is not even necessary; simply rinse and use.

#### Spicy Asian Slaw

3 tablespoons rice vinegar  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon red pepper flakes, crushed

4 cups (8 ozs.) packaged coleslaw mix  
(shredded fresh cabbage & carrots)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup raisins or dried cranberries  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup green onions, thinly sliced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup peanuts or cashews, chopped (optional)

Combine vinegar, soy sauce, sesame oil, and pepper flakes. Mix well. Add coleslaw mix, raisins, and green onions. Toss well.

Chill at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours before serving. Sprinkle with peanuts, if desired. Makes 4 servings. Preparation time: 1-minute.

### Quick Side Dish Stuffing

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup onion, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup celery, sliced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter or margarine  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup (14.5 oz. can) chicken broth

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup raisins  
1 bag (8 oz.) herbed stuffing mix  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

Cook onion and celery in butter over medium heat 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add broth and raisins. Bring to a boil.

Stir in stuffing mix and pecans. (Stuffing may be placed in a greased baking dish and refrigerated.) Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes or until heated through. Serves as a side dish with chicken, turkey, or pork. Makes 6-8 servings. Preparation time: 20 minutes.

### Cranberry Cornmeal Cookies

New York State Fair butter cookie winner!

$1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups butter, softened  
2 tablespoons corn syrup  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons vanilla

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 cup cornmeal  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups chopped dried cranberries  
Sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. In large mixer bowl combine sugar and butter. Beat at medium speed until well mixed (1 to 2 minutes). Add corn syrup, eggs and vanilla; continue beating until well mixed (1 to 2 minutes). Add flour, cornmeal, baking powder and salt. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed. Stir in dried cranberries.

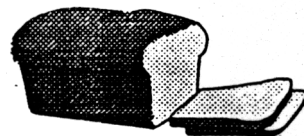
Shape rounded teaspoonfuls of dough into balls; roll in sugar. Place 1 inch apart on cookie sheets; flatten slightly with hand. Bake for 9 to 13 minutes or until edges of cookies are lightly browned. Makes 7 dozen cookies.

Nutrition facts (1 cookie): Calories 80, Protein 1g, Carbohydrate 11g, Fat 3.5g, Cholesterol 15mg, Sodium 60mg.

### Cranberry Orange Bread

2 cups flour  
1 cup uncooked oats (quick or old fashioned)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup brown sugar  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon soda  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup orange juice

2 eggs  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon grated orange peel  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped cranberries  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped nuts (optional)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt (optional)



Heat oven 350 degrees. Grease and flour 9 x 5 loaf pan. Combine first 6 ingredients - mix well - set aside. Beat orange juice, eggs, oil and orange peel. Mix well. Add to dry ingredients, mixing until moistened. Stir in cranberries and nuts. Pour in pan. Bake 50-60 minutes or until pick comes out clean.

Sources: *Down Home Cookin'* flyers Potter-Randall County, *Environmental Nutrition*, November 2001

### Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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