

Blueberries

History

The blueberry is indigenous to North America. However, its value as a commercial fruit crop was only realized in the past 50 years. Mrs. Elizabeth White, a New Jersey grower, and Dr. Frederick Coville, a USDA researcher, conducted original breeding work and research shortly after the turn of the century. Mrs. White began her blueberry collection by selecting from the Pine Barrens of New Jersey only those plants with berries too large to fit through her wedding band.

Buying & Storage Tips

- Arkansas blueberries are available in June and July.
- Select berries that are plump and firm with a light silvery “bloom.” This bloom is a natural protective wax on the berries.
- Select ripe blueberries since unripe berries do not become sweeter after they are picked. Ripe blueberries have a light blue to blue-black color. The deepness of the blue color depends on the variety. Red or green berries are not ripe and have a sour flavor.
- Blueberries should be refrigerated immediately after harvest.
- Decayed or moldy blueberries should be removed before the blueberries are refrigerated.
- Do not wash blueberries before storing because moisture allows mold to grow. Instead, wash blueberries just prior to using.

Preparation Tips

- Gently wash blueberries in cold water just prior to using. Drain them in a colander or place on paper towels to dry.
 - Blueberries can be eaten fresh or baked in muffins, pies or cakes. Blueberry sauce is also delicious served over pancakes or ice cream.
 - For freezing and canning directions, contact your local county extension office.
- Store blueberries in a container with a loose cover. Depending upon the initial freshness of the berries, they can be stored in the refrigerator for two days to one week.

Nutrition Information

Blueberries are rich in antioxidants and other phytochemicals that may help prevent cancer, heart disease and urinary tract infections.

1 cup blueberries, unsweetened

Calories: 82	Fiber: 4.4 g
Fat: 0.6 g	Sodium: low (0 mg)
Protein: 1.0 g	Potassium: medium (129 mg)
Carbohydrate: 20.5 g	Vitamin C: 30% RDI*

*Reference Daily Intake



Recipes

Blueberries are low in calories and fat and high in fiber and vitamin C. Although their actual amount of nutrients may seem small, their contribution is significant if two or more servings of fruits are eaten daily.

Blueberry Pie

1 baked 9-inch pie shell
4 cups blueberries
¾ cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
⅛ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup cold water
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Reduced fat whipped topping (optional)

Combine 2 cups blueberries, sugar, cornstarch, salt, cinnamon and water. Cook, stirring constantly until thick. Remove from heat, add lemon juice. Cool. Place remaining blueberries in baked pie shell. Cover with cooked berry mixture. Chill at least 4 hours. Serve with whipped topping if desired.

Calories: 202
Carbohydrate: 39 g
Protein: 1 g
Fat: 5 g

Fiber: 2 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Sodium: 122 mg

Fresh Blueberry Sauce

2 cups fresh blueberries
⅓ cup sugar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon or lime juice
½ teaspoon vanilla

Wash blueberries and crush in saucepan. Add sugar and fresh lemon or lime juice. Mix well. Bring to a boil, and boil 1 minute stirring constantly. Add vanilla. Chill. Serve over puddings, cakes, waffles, pancakes or ice cream. Makes 1½ cups.

Serving Size = 2 tablespoons

Calories: 36
Carbohydrate: 9 g
Protein: 0 g

Fat: 0 g
Fiber: 0.5 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Sodium: 0.5 mg

Fresh Blueberry Muffins

2 cups unsifted all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1 egg or 2 egg whites
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk
1 cup fresh blueberries
2 tablespoons granulated sugar

In large bowl mix together flour, brown sugar, baking powder and salt. In small bowl beat together egg, oil and milk; add all at once to flour mixture and stir until just moist. Fold in blueberries. Spoon into greased or paper-lined 2¾-inch muffin cups and sprinkle with granulated sugar. Bake at 425°F for 20 to 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Serve warm. Makes 12 muffins.

Calories: 150
Carbohydrate: 25 g
Protein: 3 g
Fat: 4 g

Fiber: 1 g
Cholesterol: 19 mg
Sodium: 187 mg

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Enjoy Arkansas' Fresh Blueberries