

Craving Cranberry
This Winter





Originally called the “crane berry” because of the shape of its blossoms, cranberries have a deep-rooted history in North America.

Most likely served at the original Thanksgiving dinner, the first documented harvest has been traced to 1816 on Cape Cod in Dennis, Massachusetts. Native Americans used the fruit as a food source, a medicinal cure, and a dye for blankets and rugs. All of this nostalgia not only inspires me to reach for a tall glass of juice, but also to learn more about American cuisine traditions.

Facts

Cranberries are one of three commercially important fruits native to North America—blueberries and Concord grapes also are indigenous to the continent. Commonly thought to grow in water, cranberries mature on vines in sandy bogs and marshes where water is used as a means of irrigation and insect control, as well as to protect the plant from weather damage. Many growers flood their crops in order to use water-reel harvesting machines instead of handpicking.

Shiny and plump, cranberries range in color from bright light red to dark burgundy. Rich in antioxidants, flavonoids and vitamin C, these small berries play a role in maintaining cardiovascular health and help to decrease total cholesterol, as well as low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad” cholesterol levels. Adding these tangy morsels to your diet can help to treat urinary tract infections, as well as prevent heart disease, certain cancers and peptic ulcers.

In the kitchen

Most commonly, cranberries are too tart to be eaten off the vine. Instead, they often are cooked to make sauces, jellies, pies and beverages. Crisp salad greens are complemented by the light, tangy taste of Cranberry Vinaigrette Dressing at The Heartland Spa in Gilman, Illinois. Executive chef Thomas Ryan featured Cranberry-Orange Relish—an alternative to traditional cranberry sauce—on last year’s Thanksgiving Day menu at JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort, Spa & Golf. For a moist, sweet bread that is perfect as a snack or breakfast treat, try Escondido, California-based Golden Door’s recipe for Pumpkin Cranberry Bread. Longing for dessert? Try Apple Cranberry Risotto at The Hills Health Ranch in 108 Mile Ranch, British Columbia, Canada. See also **Cranberry Apple Crisp**, courtesy of Eleanor Brown, food consultant at The Oaks at Ojai in Ojai, California.

In the spa

In the skin care industry, antioxidants are helping with the fight against aging by protecting the body from free radical damage, making cranberries a key element in any skin care regimen. The fruit also has been found to have antibacterial properties—Native Americans would draw out venom from poisoned-arrow wounds

Quick Facts

- Because of small pockets of air inside the cavity of the fruit, cranberries bounce, lending them the nickname “bounceberries.” They also float in water, which is key to one method by which the crop is harvested.
- In the United States, nearly 400 million pounds of cranberries are consumed each year, with 20% of those being eaten during the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Pemmican—a mixture of dried cranberries, dried meat, cornmeal and fat—was made into cakes carried by Native Americans on long journeys as a durable food source.
- There are four major varieties of cranberries, including mountain, highbush, European and American—the most common in the United States, with the characteristic of bright red coloring.
- During World War II, about 1 million pounds of dehydrated cranberries were required by American troops each year.

with a mixture of the berries and cornmeal. Essencia's Cranberry Hydrating Mist provides antioxidant, antibacterial and moisture-replenishing benefits to the skin in a cool, refreshing spray. Pure Enzymes Exfoliating Mask, from CosMedix, utilizes enzymes to exfoliate impurities, which is ideal for acne-prone skin. Blending cranberry, pomegranate, almond, wild cherry and loquat—an Asian evergreen—Biotone Spa's Pomegranate & Cranberry Hydrating Body Lotion nourishes the skin while stimulating the senses. Combo Toner, from Skin Blends, contains cranberry, as well as green tea, papaya, chamomile and cucumber, to gently cleanse and protect the skin.

The Dan'l Webster Inn and Spa in Sandwich, Massachusetts, mixes cranberry

and rosemary in its Cranberry Smoothie Foot Treatment, and also features a CranMary ice mask. Also on the menu are the Cranberry-Rose Sugar Scrub and Cranberry-Citrus Salt Scrub. The Pomegranate & Cranberry Salt Glo & Body Butter Treatment—new to The Val-Kill Health Spa at The Roosevelt Inn & Suites in Saratoga Springs, New York—gently exfoliates with Dead Sea mineral salts while nourishing the skin with a unique shea butter mixed with a fruity blend. At Angel's Spa and Wellness Centre at Delta Sherwood Inn in Port Carling, Ontario, Canada, two exclusive spa experiences capitalize on the cranberries from a local farm. The Cranberry Scrub and Wrap begins with a Cranberry Scrub, followed by a heated Cranberry Wine

mask. The scrub also is offered as an individual treatment.

Pick a classic

Whether added for their healthful properties or their tart, tangy flavor, cranberries often are overlooked as a crucial part of a well-balanced diet. Sprinkle dried cranberries in your bowl of cereal, or grab a cranberry fruit juice blend on your way out the door. Don't cheat your skin either—look for cleansers and toners that feature cranberry to capitalize on its many beneficial properties. ✕



Cranberry Apple Crisp

From Eleanor Brown, food consultant, at The Oaks at Ojai in Ojai, California

Makes 14 servings

- ½ cup apple juice concentrate
- ½ tablespoon arrowroot
- 3 cups fresh cranberries, washed
- 3 cups Granny Smith or Newtown pippin apples, sliced
- 1 tablespoon brown rice flour
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup rolled oats
- ¼ cup Grape-Nuts¹
- 2 tablespoons apple juice concentrate
- French cream, nonfat yogurt or low-calorie sour cream

¹ Grape-Nuts is a registered trade name of Kraft Foods, Northfield, IL.



Photo courtesy of The Oaks at Ojai in Ojai, California.



1. Combine ½ cup apple juice concentrate and arrowroot, and whisk together in a medium saucepan. Stir over low heat to thicken. Mixture will be thick and clear. *Microwave option:* Combine in a 4-cup glass measuring cup, and microwave for 2 minutes, until thick.
2. Toss cranberries, apple slices, brown rice flour and cinnamon with the apple syrup mixture. Place in a 9" x 12" baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Toss rolled oats, Grape-Nuts and remaining 2 tablespoons of apple juice concentrate together in a small bowl to moisten cereal. Sprinkle over cranberry apple mixture.
4. Bake at 350° F for 40 minutes, until hot and bubbly. Serve warm or chilled. Top with French cream, nonfat yogurt or low-calorie sour cream.