



BERRY BENEFICIAL

Berries are a wonderful food. Not only do they taste great, they are nutritional powerhouses that deserve to be included in your every day diet. Berries taste best when in season locally, but we are fortunate that they are grown year round in the United States and can go from grower to a local store in a matter of days.

This post will discuss the nutritional components of popular berries, provide tips on how to save money buying them, properly store them, and some easy recipes that can be made in an air fryer or no cooking.

Join me on a journey of all things berries.

Lets Go!

BERRIES, BERRIES, BERRIES

Nothing says summer like berries. Whether it is fresh strawberry shortcake or warm blackberry cobbler with a little vanilla ice cream. Summer life is better with all that berries have to offer.

Besides tasting great, they are super nutritious! Versatile, great for snacks, and good for you. Very few foods pack so much into such a small package.

Let's explore the benefits of berries.



The good stuff

that makes them good for you

Soluble Fiber

Attracts water in your small intestine and turns to a gel that can slow the absorption of glucose and cholesterol

Insoluble Fiber

Does not absorb water. Adds bulk and help food move through the digestive process more quickly

Polyphenols

Compounds in plant foods that work as antioxidants and may offer protection against diabetes, and some cancers, cardiovascular diseases and neurodegenerative diseases. Includes Anthocyanins (red, blue, purple colors), Flavonoids, and Flavanols.

Vitamins

Organic molecules that are essential for our cells to function properly. They are required for us to grow, reproduce, and be healthy. We can only make 2 vitamins in our body, all the others must come from food.

Minerals

Inorganic molecules that come from soils and water, are absorbed by plants or eaten by humans/animals. Required for healthy body functions such as strong bones, nerve signals, hormones, and even a normal heartbeat.

The largest true berry is the Atlantic Giant pumpkin and weighs 2,749 pounds!



STRAWBERRIES

Roses are red and strawberries are too!

*Roses and strawberries are related & both members of the genus *Fragaria*.*

- *Excellent source of Vitamin C, fiber, and folate.*
- *More vitamin C than an orange!*
- *Great source of iron, potassium, and calcium.*
- *Antioxidants to combat free radicals and inflammation.*
- **Choose** *clean, dry, even bright/brilliantly colored berries with good shine and green stems/leaves.*
- *Linked to improved cognitive function and improved balance.*

1 cup of sliced strawberries offers:

- only 53 calories
- 3.3 grams fiber 11.8% of RDI
- Vitamin C 108% of the RDI
- Folate 9.9 % of the RDI
- Potassium 6 % of the RDI
- Magnesium 5.1% of the RDI
- Iron 3.8% of the RDI
- Manganese 3.1 % of the RDI
- Calcium 2.6% of the RDI

Strawberries are not true berries! They are “accessory” fruits that are covered with fruit. What does that mean? The “seeds” are not really seeds, they are actually the fruit. The fleshy red part we know as the fruit is actually just extra tissue that is holding many small fruits.

**STRAWBERRIES CONTAIN SALICYLATES -
THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT IN ASPIRIN**

BLUEBERRIES

- *USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, laboratory studies link blueberries to improved motor function and may reverse short term memory deficits linked with aging.*
- *Excellent source of Vitamin K, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Potassium, and Manganese*
- *Good source of fiber*
- *Excellent source of anthocyanins (blue color) and are antioxidant powerhouses*
- *Low glycemic index food that may help regulate blood sugar levels*
- **Choose** *blueberries that are dry, plump, and free from bruises or dents. Avoid blueberries that seem shriveled or lack the soft white film on the skin.*

1 cup of fresh blueberries provides:

- *84.4 calories*
- *3.56 g fiber 12.6 % of the RDI*
- *Vitamin C 16% of the RDI*
- *Potassium 2.6% of the RDI*
- *Magnesium 2.1% of the RDI*
- *Iron 2.3% of the RDI*
- *Manganese 21.6% of the RDI*
- *Vitamin K 23.8% of RDI*



The white “film” on blueberries is called BLOOM. It’s a sign the berries are fresh. It protects them from insects, sun, and bacteria.

RASPBERRIES

- *Excellent source of antioxidants*
- *Excellent source of fiber, Vitamins A, C, E, K, folate and magnesium.*
- *Can be Red, Black, Gold, Purple, or yellow. The sweetest are Gold.*
- **Choose** *berries that are plump, brightly colored, and have a soft hazy gloss appearance.*
- *Shortest shelf life of all berries. Try to use within 2-3 days and keep in the refrigerator.*
- *High in ellagic acid - an antioxidant that combats free radicals in the body.*

1 cup of raspberries offers:

- *only 65 calories*
- *8 grams fiber* *28% of RDI*
- *Vitamin C* *36% of the RDI*
- *Folate* *6.5% of the RDI*
- *Vitamin K* *8% of RDI*
- *Potassium* *4.5% of the RDI*
- *Magnesium* *6% of the RDI*
- *Iron* *4% of the RDI*
- *Manganese* *6.7% of the RDI*
- *Calcium* *3% of the RDI*

THE LITTLE HAIRS ON RASPBERRIES ARE 'STYLES', THEY PROTECT THE BERRY AND ARE EDIBLE

BLACKBERRIES



Batology: the scientific study of blackberries
A batologist studies blackberries not BATS!

Dried or frozen? ... does it matter?

- **Dried fruit (without added sugar) is a healthy snack option.**
- **Dried fruit has most of its water removed, so it has all of the nutrition AND CALORIES in a smaller package.**
- **Vitamin C is lost during the drying process.**
- **It keeps all the polyphenol antioxidants, fiber, minerals, and other vitamins.**



- **Frozen fruit maintains all the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants of fresh fruit.**
- **May contain more nutrients than “fresh” produce in the store because it is picked when it is ripest and frozen within hours. Produce in the store is picked before it is fully ripe, spends up to a week in transportation, losing vitamins during this time.**
- **The texture of frozen fruit will be softer when thawed, but nutritionally the same or better.**

Unlike most fruit, raspberries and grapes do not continue to ripen after being picked.

The effect of cooking berries



- *Baking retains more nutrients than all cooking methods. Vitamin C and B vitamins are minimally lost in baking.*
- *Boiling causes the most nutrient loss unless you are consuming the liquid.*

Berry First Aid: How to care for your berries

- *Keep them as DRY as possible in their original container.*
- *Keep COOL in the lower part of the refrigerator as close to 34 degrees as possible*
- *Rinse in cool water JUST BEFORE you are ready to eat*
- *For the best flavor, allow berries to come to room temperature*
- *If you have the space, you can spread them out on a baking sheet so they do not touch*



Melons are technically berries.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

A list of the 12 conventionally grown fruits and vegetables with the highest levels of pesticide residues. Pesticides used in both conventional and organic farming can be harmful to health in high doses but more research is needed to make definitive claims of risks to exposure through food.

*The **dirty dozen** are (in order of most pesticide residue to least):*

- 1. Strawberries*
- 2. Spinach*
- 3. Kale, collard and mustard greens*
- 4. Peaches*
- 5. Pears*
- 6. Nectarines*
- 7. Apples*
- 8. Grapes*
- 9. Peppers (bell and hot)*
- 10. Cherries*
- 11. Blueberries*
- 12. green beans*

It is important to rinse all produce (conventional or organic) prior to eating, cutting, and cooking. You can use produce wash available in the store to remove waxes, sealants and pesticide/herbicide residues. These can be expensive so below is a hack that will dissolve waxes and chemical residues and kill any bacteria that may be present:

Soak produce in a baking soda water solution. 3-4 Tablespoons baking soda for a sink full of cold water or 1 teaspoon to 2 cups water for a bowl. Submerge produce for 15 minutes, swish around and gently rub fruit surface to remove wax/dirt/chemicals, briefly rinse, dry and refrigerate.





HOW TO ENJOY BERRIES FOR LESS \$

Berries will have the best flavor and be cheaper when they are in season (late spring to late summer).

*“Pick your own” at a farm like Berry Patch Farms in Brighton. *It’s fun for the kids as well**

Take advantage of the Weekly Digital Deals at King Soopers when berries are on sale. Buy all you can, eat a package, and put the rest in the freezer. Just rinse, dry, put them in a bag and freeze.

Buy frozen berries at Dollar Tree - \$1.25 for a bag is less than half the price of grocery stores.

Great Value brand at Walmart is cheaper than local grocery stores.

Plant some of your own strawberry plants on your patio in the spring and enjoy.

Dollar Tree is also the cheapest place in town to get Whole Wheat bread. Less than half the price of the grocery stores.

Don’t throw berries away! If you can’t use them, just freeze them for later ... OR use them in one of the recipies to follow!



BERRY PICOSITA SALAD

Compliments of Driscolls: this salad is perfect blend of sweet, tangy, and spicy

Prep time: 15 minutes

Serves: 6

Keep left over dressing refrigerated for additional fruit salads. It will keep for 2 weeks.

I like to view recipes as a guide.

Feel free to substitute berries and fruit that are available, in season, or that you like.

You could add honey dew melon or kiwi fruit for variety.

You can serve on a bed of butter lettuce or napa cabbage leaves.

Experiment and enjoy!

For additional berry food and drink ideas go to: Driscolls.com

Dressing:

*1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup Tajin Fruity Chamoy hot sauce
2 Tablespoons Tajin Classico seasoning
Zest **and** juice of 1/2 medium lemon
Zest of 1 medium lime
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard*

Wisk together and set aside.

In large bowl combine:

*1 lb strawberries (stem, core, and dice berries)
6 oz blackberries
6 oz blueberries
6 oz raspberries
1 1/2 cups small diced jicama
1 1/2 cups small diced mango*

Gently mix.

*Divide salad between 6 bowls or plates,
Wisk dressing again and drizzle desired amount over salad
Lightly sprinkle salads with Tajin Classico as desired*

Serve and enjoy.



EASY PEASY BERRY CRISP

This makes an 8x8 inch pan, but feel free to make more or less depending on how much fruit you have on hand. This is my go to to use up fruit that is getting old.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: depends on size of pan

Serves: 6

TIP: Make a large batch of crumb topping and keep it in a bag in the freezer to make fruit crisp whenever you have left over fruit. It is great any time of the year and super quick.

Again, use the recipe as a guide.

Feel free to substitute berries, fruit, and spices to your liking.

Cinnamon and nutmeg go great with apples!

A little sage compliments blackberries.

A touch of lemon or orange zest goes great with blueberries.

Experiment and enjoy!

Crumb topping:

3/4 cup light brown sugar

1/2 cup flour

3/4 cup "old fashioned" oats

1/4-1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon (if you like it)

1/3 cup butter (room temp, **not** melted) in 1/2 inch cubes

Add all dry ingredients and mix gently. Scatter butter cubes and mix using your finger tips until it is mixed, does not look dry, and is crumbly

Fruit filling:

Use fresh or frozen berries/fruit. Any combination of your choice. Larger fruit (apples, strawberries, peaches, etc) should be cut into 1" cubes or sliced to cook evenly. If using frozen fruit, let it thaw and drain (or drink) the juice.

3 1/2 cups fruit

3/4 cup sugar

2 Tablespoons corn starch (to thicken when cooking)

Squeeze of lemon juice

Pinch of salt

Any spices you may like (Vanilla, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, etc)

Mix all ingredients in a bowl until combined. Pour into a greased baking dish of your choice. Cover with crumbled topping. Bake in oven/air fryer at 350 degrees until the mixture is bubbly and the topping is browned.

Let cool about 10 minutes and enjoy!



Berry vinaigrette hack

*1/2 cup mashed berries
1/2 cup Italian dressing
sugar/honey to taste
Wisk together*

Not-plain water

*Mash a couple berries
in a glass with a fork,
add a couple ice cubes,
pour in sparkling water,
enjoy!*



Blackberry BBQ sauce

*Use equal parts blackberry puree (or
just mashed blackberries if you don't
mind the seeds) and BBQ sause.*

Mix, taste, adjust.

Great on bison or chicken.