Blueberry Basics

This flavorful berry is enjoyed in muffins, cobblers, pies, and pancakes as well as in fresh fruit salads or just by the handful. Blueberries are brimming with vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals, which are recognized for their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant health benefits.

Selection & Storage

- When buying blueberries, look for plump, fresh berries that have a uniformly deep purple blue or blue-black color.
- Avoid baskets that have signs of leakage, which indicate they may have been mishandled.
- Do not wash blueberries until you are ready to use them.
- Refrigerate blueberries for 1 or 2 days before preserving to improve flavor.

Berry Helpful Hints

- Blueberries tend to change color during cooking. Acids, like lemon juice and vinegar make the blue in blueberries turn red. On the other hand, a batter with a lot of baking soda may turn the blueberries greenish-blue.
- Stir blueberries (right from the freezer, if frozen) into a cake or muffin batter last to minimize color streaking.
- When making pancakes and waffles, add the blueberries as soon as the batter has been poured on the griddle or waffle iron. This will make the pancakes prettier and they'll be easier to flip. If frozen blueberries are used, cooking time may have to be increased to be sure the berries are heated through.
- Store whole frozen berries in their unopened or tightly resealed packages in your freezer. If berries are to be served alone, thaw until they are pliable and serve partially frozen. Add sugar to taste - it brings out both the flavor and the luscious juices.

Berry Good Ideas

Here are some ideas for adding blueberries to meals and snacks:

- Add to cereal, yogurt or oatmeal at breakfast.
- Use as a topping for ice cream, pancakes and waffles.
- Add to fruit salads and compotes, or use as an ingredient in muffins and pancakes.
- Make frozen fruit kabobs for kids using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes and blueberries.
- Add fresh or frozen to smoothies for a refreshing treat.

Freezing Blueberries

Select full-flavored, ripe berries. Remove leaves, stems and immature or defective berries.

DO NOT wash blueberries before freezing. Blueberries should be completely dry before freezing. Washing results in a tougher skinned product.

Place blueberries in a single layer on a tray in the freezer and then pack into containers as soon as they are frozen. Or simply pack berries directly into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze. Rinse berries before using.
Blueberry Wheat Muffins

1 egg  
½ cup milk  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
¼ cup plain flour  
¼ cup whole wheat flour  
½ cup sugar  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
¾ cup blueberries

Heat oven to 400 °F. Grease muffin pan. Beat egg, stir in milk and oil. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a separate bowl, and then add liquid ingredients. Stir just until moistened. Batter will be lumpy. Add blueberries. (Add frozen blueberries without thawing.) Fill cups ⅔ full. Bake 15 to 20 minutes. Makes 8 to 10 muffins.

Lower Fat Recipe: Replace oil with 2½ tablespoons applesauce and reduce milk to ¼ cup milk.

Lower Sugar Recipe: Replace sugar with 7 tablespoons Splenda® and 1 tablespoon honey. (Measure ½ cup of Splenda and remove 1 tablespoon to equal 7 tablespoons.) Add ¼ teaspoon baking soda.

Blueberry Smoothie

¾ cup unsweetened 100% orange or pineapple juice  
½ cup fruit-flavored low-fat yogurt  
1 cup frozen, unsweetened blueberries

Blend all ingredients well in blender and drink!

For more blueberry recipes see HGIC 3160, Pie Fillings and HGIC 3165, Fruit Syrups & Honeyes. For information on growing blueberry bushes, see HGIC 1401, Blueberry.

Source:

This information has been reviewed and adapted for use in South Carolina by P.H. Schmutz, HGIC Food Safety Specialist, and E.H. Hoyle, Extension Food Safety Specialist, Clemson University. (New 05/06. Revised 04/07.)

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