


 Produce of the  
Month

# Cranberries

**Welcome!** The cranberry is one of only three fruits native to North America that is commercially grown. The only others are the blueberry and Concord grape. Cranberries are a very picky crop, as they require very specific conditions to grow. They need acidic peat soil and sand, as well as an adequate supply of fresh water and an unusually long growing season lasting from April until November. The winter months are also an important component to growing cranberries, as the fruit requires a long, chilly dormancy period to mature fruiting buds. All of these requirements come together in unique places called bogs, created during the last ice age, and the region best known for bogs is Cape Cod, Massachusetts. This is not the only place in North America where cranberries

come from though. Cranberry bogs can be found in several states along the Eastern Seaboard and in the Pacific Northwest, and in Canada cranberries are grown in several of the Maritime Provinces, as well as Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

Cranberries are packed with a variety of nutrients, vitamins and antioxidants with enormous health benefits. They are also a highly versatile fruit that can be used in recipes for every meal of the day, not to mention healthy snacks and desserts. Their signature tart flavor adds an unmistakably delicious flavor to dishes, but of course are a wonderful treat straight from the bog or in the form of juice.

*Source: Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association, The Cranberry Institute*

## Cranberry History and Present Day Production

The name "cranberry" dates back to the pilgrims who were introduced to the fruit by Native Americans in the 17th century. The pilgrims found the spring blossoms of cranberries resembled Sandhill cranes, and thus they called them "cranberries". Over time, the word evolved into its present form. Cranberries became especially popular with whalers and other seafarers as the fruit helped prevent outbreaks of scurvy aboard their vessels.

The 1800s were an important time for cranberries, as they were first successfully cultivated in 1816, they made their way to Europe in the 1820s and a number of important innovations in cranberry growing were developed, including the flooding of bogs to prevent frost damage and control harmful insects.

Cranberry sauce became a popular dish served at Thanksgiving, a holiday proclaimed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, but interestingly enough, the dish itself did not come about until 1912 when it was first marketed in Hanson, Massachusetts.

Today, about 47,000 acres of land in the United States and Canada are devoted to growing cranberries, about 39,000 of which are located in the U.S. This may not seem like a lot until you consider that the U.S. produced 6,885,000 barrels of cranberries in 2008! That equates to an average of 176.5 barrels of cranberries per acre! No matter how you look at it, that is a lot of cranberries from a relatively small amount of land!



*Sources: Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Pacific Coast Cranberry Web*

## A Tasty Treat To Try At Home

### Cranberry Orange Relish

- 1 Orange, Washed and Dried
- 1 (12 oz.) Bag of Fresh Cranberries
- 1/2 cup Sugar
- 1/8 tsp Cinnamon

#### METHOD

1. Cut up the entire orange (skin and all) into large chunks.
2. Put orange chunks, cranberries, sugar, and cinnamon in a food processor.
3. Pulse on and off until finely chopped.
4. Pour cranberry orange relish into a large covered bowl.
5. Place the bowl in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours to allow the flavors to combine.
6. Eat!
7. If you're not eating it right away, store the relish in the refrigerator. It will keep for 3 days in the fridge.



*\*Note: SPLENDA No Calorie Sweetener, Granulated may be used in place of the sugar. Simply replace the sugar with the same quantity of SPLENDA.*



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## "Cran-tastic" Health Benefits

Cranberries do more than just satisfy your taste buds with their tart sweetness; they offer a plethora of health benefits that simply cannot be denied.

Cranberries are an excellent source of Vitamins C, E and K, a number of important amino acids and minerals such as manganese, potassium and copper. In fact, a single one cup serving of raw cranberries provides 22% daily value of Vitamin C, 18% DV of manganese and 6% of DV Vitamins E and K. Meanwhile, that same serving of cranberries only has 46 calories. It is very low in sodium and contains no fat or cholesterol.

Of course, in addition to eating raw cranberries, drinking cranberry juice is also very popular. Just one cup of unsweetened cranberry juice delivers

39% daily value of Vitamin C, 16% DV of Vitamin K, 15% DV of Vitamin E, 6% DV of potassium and 4% DV of both magnesium and iron! Now that's a lot of nutrition right there folks!

To top it all off, research shows that cranberries contain bacteria-blocking compounds that can help reduce the risk of urinary tract infections, ulcers and even gum disease! Without a doubt, cranberries are a wonderful addition to your diet, and can be easily included among the foods you eat every day! Here's to "cran-tastic" health!

Sources: WHFoods.com, NutritionData.com, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association

## Notable Quotable

*"There are four unbroken rules when it comes to Thanksgiving: there must be turkey and dressing, cranberries, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie."*

- John Hadamuscin,

*John Hadamuscin's Down Home*

## Did You Know That ...

- Cranberries are almost 90% water.
- Some cranberry vines in Massachusetts are over 150 years old and still producing fruit!
- At the end of the song "Strawberry Fields Forever", John Lennon repeats the words "cranberry sauce" over and over again.
- Cranberry bogs are often pictured flooded, but they do not remain that way all year. In fact, they are only flooded in the fall for harvesting and in the winter to protect the crop from extreme cold. During the growing season, cranberry bogs are irrigated regularly, but are not flooded.
- Small pockets of air in cranberries allow them to bounce and float on water.
- The average can of cranberry sauce contains about 200 berries altogether.
- Cranberries are a cousin of blueberries.
- Cranberries are very light weight. In fact, just one pound of cranberries equals roughly 333 cranberries.

Sources: Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Organization, Pacific Coast Cranberry Web



## Cranberries on the Cranium

*Just how much do you now know about cranberries?*

*Fill in the blanks...but no peeking!*

1. Cranberries are one of \_\_\_\_\_ fruits native to North America that are grown commercially.
2. The pilgrims called cranberries "\_\_\_\_\_".
3. There are cranberry vines in Massachusetts more than \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
4. Cranberries are almost 90% \_\_\_\_\_.
5. "Strawberry Fields Forever," in which the words "cranberry sauce" are said over and over again, was performed by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Cranberry sauce was first marketed in 1912 in \_\_\_\_\_, Massachusetts.
7. Cranberry bogs are \_\_\_\_\_ in the fall and winter, but not during the growing season.
8. In 2008, the U.S. produced 6,885,000 \_\_\_\_\_ of cranberries.
9. Cranberries were popular with whalers because it prevented outbreaks of \_\_\_\_\_ onboard their ships.
10. Cape \_\_\_\_\_ is a leading cranberry producing region in the United States.

## For More Information

For more information about cranberries, please contact:

[WHFoods.com](http://WHFoods.com)

[NutritionData.com](http://NutritionData.com)

[Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association](http://CapeCodCranberryGrowers.org)

[The Cranberry Institute](http://TheCranberryInstitute.org)

Answers to Cranberries on The Cranium: 1: three, 2: cranberries, 3: 150, 4: water, 5: The Beatles, 6: Hanson, 7: flooded, 8: barrels, 9: scurvy, 10: Cod