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healthy eating

Cranberries

Don't typecast this saucy seasonal star. The tart superfood has a host of other uses.

BY SARA REISTAD-LONG

C-FOOD

Move over, OJ: One cup of cranberry juice can deliver up to 100 percent of the recommended daily dose of vitamin C—just make sure to look for a label that says “100 percent juice” and is free of high fructose corn syrup. There's evidence that the berry's C—along with other antioxidants—can help hypertension. In one study, people who drank two glasses of low-sugar cranberry juice daily saw a significant drop in their blood pressure.

FILL, BABY, FILL!

Cranberries are loaded with water-soluble fiber—the kind that keeps you feeling full. Both fresh and dried cranberries deliver ample amounts: One cup of fresh cranberries (cooked or raw) contains about 5 g fiber and 50 calories, while ½ cup of the dried version has 3½ g fiber and 187 calories—so keep tabs on portions if you're choosing the dried variety.

GERM WARFARE

Bacteria don't stand a chance against these guys: Several studies show that cranberries and cranberry juice can help ward off urinary tract infections—in some cases, even those caused by strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Cranberries also seem to thwart *h. pylori* (associated with stomach ulcers) and various gum-disease-causing germs.



MAKE THEM LAST

Fresh berries will keep for up to two months, or cooked for about a month. In both cases, seal tight and refrigerate.



Get your berry on

Call them the MVP of berries—as in most versatile player! You can reap the health benefits of these little red fruits in many forms. Try them:

JUICED Take advantage of cranberries' high acid content and use fresh juice from the berries in place of vinegar in salad dressings and marinades.

DRIED Toss 1 to 2 Tbsp. into oatmeal, spinach salad, couscous, or quinoa. Look for dried berries that are free of preservatives, since they can degrade the berries' antioxidants.

COOKED Cranberry relish really perks up sandwiches. The berries also add a bright accent to baked goods, wild rice, and meat dishes, especially pork. ■

SOURCES: SUSAN BLUM, M.D., AUTHOR OF *THE IMMUNE SYSTEM RECOVERY PLAN*. KATE GEAGAN, R.D., AUTHOR OF *GO GREEN GET LEAN*. KEREN GILBERT, M.S., R.D., AUTHOR OF *HD DIET PLAN: 12 WEEKS TO LIFELONG WEIGHT LOSS*.

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