

Cranberry Harvest Time

The New World has offered several unique foods to the rest of the planet. There are blueberries, potatoes, the tomato, peppers, corn, pumpkins, sunflowers, and the cranberry. The cranberry is a rather unique fruit. It has been harvested since long before the Mayflower, but did not become a commercial cultivated crop until the early 1800's on Cape Cod.

Throughout the 1800's, farmers helped improve cultivation techniques, Henry David Thoreau wrote about flooding the bogs to increase yield. The invention of the "Cranberry Stair" by Peg Leg Webb in 1888, helped to solidify the fruit as a viable commodity. This device takes advantage of the fact that ripe, wholesome cranberries bounce, and so may be separated from poor fruit.

There are many reasons why cranberries have become so popular, and have become such a huge crop in certain states. Cranberries are rich in vitamin C, and anti oxidants. Once thought of as only a Thanksgiving dish, the health benefits of cranberries have helped to grow acreage and harvests in the past 40 years. Chefs are discovering the unique qualities of the cranberry, for use in beef and game dishes, appetizer combinations, and in desserts.

Wisconsin is the major producer of cranberries in North America, growing about twice as many tons as Massachusetts, or British Columbia. They are also harvested in New Jersey, Maine, Oregon and Washington. In about 1960, cranberry products began a surge in popularity, with cranberry juice finding a year round market. Since then this commodity has enjoyed larger harvests, and increased plantings.

Cranberries can be used in every menu segment, in every food service establishment. They can be used sweet, savory, raw, juiced, mashed or jellied. Dried cranberries are now a very popular salad ingredient. No bar would be complete without cranberry juice, which can be purchased in many ways, from cranberry juice "cocktail", which is high sugar, and low cranberry, to 27% cranberry juice, which is low sugar, high cranberry, and very tart. Cranberry Chutney is a very useful alternative to Cranberry Sauce on anyone's menu. The cranberry can add a fruitful modern splash to your recipes at any time of year.



Here are two recipes, which are easy and impressive, and may be created long before the guests arrive.

Cranberry Spice Cake

Butter	4oz
Flour	3 cups
Sugar	2 cups
Eggs	5 each
Sour cream	1.5 cups
Cinnamon	1 Tbs
Allspice	1 tsp
Ginger	1 tsp
Cloves	1 tsp
Baking powder	2 tsp
Baking soda	1 tsp
Butter	4 oz
Brown sugar	1.5 cups
Cranberries	1 bag (12 oz)



Cream the butter and sugar. Add the eggs while beating, and then the sour cream. Sift the dry ingredients in a separate bowl, and then fold in with the wet, until just mixed.

Melt the butter, stir in the brown sugar until blended. Coat the bottom of a removable bottom angel food pan with this mixture, and then cover with the cranberries. Fill the cake pan with batter.

Bake on a sheet pan, as it will leak, at 350 degrees for about 45-55 minutes, and use a toothpick to test for doneness. Let sit for 5 minutes or so, and then flip out onto a pan. Be careful because the berries will be very hot. This cake is equally as good fresh, or several days old.

Apple Cranberry Cobbler

Flour	2 cups
Baking powder	2.5 tsp
Sugar	1/2 cup
Butter	6 Tbs or 3/4 stick
Vanilla	2 tsp
Milk	3/4 cup
Cranberries	1 cup chopped
Orange rind	1/2 tsp
Baking apples	8 each
Sugar	4 oz
Cinnamon	1/2 tsp



Sift dry ingredients together. Cut the butter into this by hand, until pea sized. Add the milk, vanilla, cranberries, and orange rind, and mix until just incorporated.

Have someone else peel the apples, and toss with the cinnamon and sugar. Fill small baking cups about 2/3 with the apple mix. Top with about 1/2 inch of batter, seal the edges if possible. Sprinkle some sugar and cinnamon on top. Bake for about 20 minutes at 425 degrees. These may be eaten hot and fresh, or reheated tomorrow, and served with ice cream.