

BLUEBERRIES

Recipe

Blueberry Smoothie

Nutrition

One cup of blueberries is:

- 84 calories
- An excellent source of vitamin C, an antioxidant
- A good source of fiber
- A source of anthocyanin that gives them their deep blue color

Anthocyanins play important roles in helping reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), cognitive decline, and cancer. The role of anthocyanins in the prevention of these diseases has been linked to their antioxidant properties, but research now suggests that anthocyanins' health benefits likely result from unidentified chemical properties beyond their antioxidant capacity.

Webb D. Anthocyanins. *Today's Dietitian*. Vol. 16 No. 3 P

History

Blueberries are indigenous to North America. Native Americans called blueberries "star berries" because the blossom end of each berry – the calyx – forms a perfect five-pointed star. The Great Spirit was said to have sent "star berries" to ease the children's hunger during a famine. And according to legend, Native Americans gave blueberries to the pilgrims to help them make it through their first winter. Native Americans dried blueberries in the sun and added them whole to soups, stews and meat, and crushed them into a powder to use on meat as a preservative.

Publications

[Growing Blueberries,](#)
[Tennessee State University](#)

[Canning Foods, PB724](#)

[Freezing Foods, PB1483](#)

[Let's Preserve Blueberries,](#)
[Penn State Extension](#)



Growing Season in Tennessee

June-July: highbush varieties (This type is native to the northern United States and are usually not as sweet as rabbiteye, but fruit matures earlier.)

July-August: rabbiteye varieties (These blueberries are native to the southern United States, mature later than highbush, and are usually slightly smaller and sweeter than highbush types.)

Selection

Choose blueberries that are:

- Light blue to blue-black color with no tint of red, and a silvery surface bloom (Size is not an indicator of maturity, but color is.) To help blueberries ripen, place them in a bag with an apple. The ethylene gas produced by the apple helps the blueberries ripen.
- Dry, plump and smooth-skinned (Avoid soft, shriveled, watery or moldy berries.)
- In a container with no signs of stains or leaking (These berries are past their prime and may be bruised.)



Quantity



A quart is about 2 pounds

For canning: A 24-quart crate weighs 36 pounds and yields 18 to 24 quarts. An average of 12 pounds makes a 7-quart canner load. An average of 7½ pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints; 1½-3 pounds (1-2 quart boxes) is needed for 1 quart jar or container.

For freezing: An average of 1 pound makes 1 pint of frozen berries.

Storage

- Refrigerate fresh blueberries either in the original container or in a covered bowl or container. Rinse them just before eating or using them in recipes.
- If your blueberries are not quite ripe, store them in a bag with an apple. Ethylene gas from the apple will cause the blueberries to ripen faster.

Food Preservation

Blueberries can be frozen packed in syrup or dry sugar, puréed or individually quick frozen. Do not rinse before freezing because this results in a tougher skinned product. Pack berries into containers leaving headspace since they expand when frozen. You also can spread them on a single layer on a tray, then pack into containers or plastic freezer bags. They will maintain their quality for about 6 months. For more freezing information, consult [Let's Preserve Blueberries, Penn State Extension](#).



Blueberries can be crushed or puréed before freezing. Wash berries and mix 1 to 1 1/8 cups of sugar with each quart (2 pounds) of crushed berries or purée. Stir until sugar is dissolved and pack into containers, leaving headspace.

Blueberries also can be canned in water, juice or syrup, or be used in jams, syrup and pie filling. For more canning information, consult [Let's Preserve Blueberries, Penn State Extension](#).

Preparation Tips

Blueberries pair well with many other ingredients including lemon, mint, rosemary, coconut, balsamic vinegar and bananas. Their sweet taste pairs well with savory foods. Try blueberries on pizza or in turkey burgers, or in a salad with cucumbers.

Do your blueberries in baked foods sink to the bottom of the pan? Try alternating a layer of batter and a layer of blueberries rather than mixing them in the batter. Or, coat blueberries with flour before stirring them into the batter. Gently fold them in at the end of the mixing cycle to minimize streaking.



The color of blueberries can change according to the pH. When exposed to acids, such as lemon juice and vinegar, they turn a reddish color. A batter with too much baking soda can turn blueberries greenish-blue. Berries in a smoothie can look grey when mixed with milk or other dairy foods. Adding a little lemon juice to your batter or smoothie will result in a more vibrant color.

Find more recipes using blueberries at [The Blueberry Council](#).

Food Safety



It is important to wash produce thoroughly under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking. Washing blueberries with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.

Keep blueberries that will be eaten raw away from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood. This includes using clean utensils so that you do not cross-contaminate.

Discard blueberries with mold. Even if you wash them off there may be an off taste. If there is mold on the surface, chances are there is more mold in the berry.