

Cranberry sauce doesn't have to be shaped like a can anymore

Cranberries are once again making their appearance in the produce sections of the supermarkets, and they add a cheerful color to the table during the holiday season. Cranberries grow in marshy land in North America and Asia and in northern and central Europe. Even though the cranberry season runs from September through December, the edible red berries are most associated with such holiday dishes as salads, sauces, and jellies.

The trailing vine of the cranberry has small slender stems which curve like the neck of a crane. Hence the name "cranberry" which in time became "cranberry".

Among the first people to appreciate the fruit were native Americans, who ate them, cooked them, dried them for adding to winter soups and stews, and also used them as medicines, dyes and food preservatives. Colonists, dating back to the Pilgrims, quickly developed a taste for the wild berry.

Today's cranberries are from cultivated acreage, and the berries are larger, glossier and more flavorful. Four major varieties exist which range in size and color, but the taste is the same.

When selecting cranberries for holiday dishes, thoroughly examine and look for dampness or stains which indicate decay. Remember twigs and other debris should not be among the berries. All berries should be plump, dry, firm, well-shaped and uniformly colored. Do not purchase if berries are withered or crushed.

Remember, the berries store well keeping one month in the refrigerator and one year in the freezer. With the chief nutrients being vitamin C, potassium and fiber, do not miss out on this year's cranberry harvest.

Whole Cranberry Sauce

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 package (12 oz.) fresh or frozen cranberries

In a saucepan mix sugar and water; stir to dissolve sugar. Bring to a boil; add cranberries, return to a boil, reduce

heat; boil gently 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Cool completely at room temperature and refrigerate. Makes about 2 1/4 cups.

Jellied Cranberry Sauce



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Prepare as directed above. Before cooling, place a wire mesh strainer over a mixing bowl. Pour contents of saucepan into strainer. Mash the cranberries with the back of a spoon, frequently scrapping the outside of the strainer, until no pulp is left. Stir contents of bowl. Pour into serving container. Cover and cool completely at room temperature. Refrigerate until serving time. Makes 1 cup.