



Fruits for Health the Pyramid Way

Wild Blueberries

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Blueberries have more antioxidant capacity than 40 other fruits and vegetables tested.

Native wild blueberries are a part of Maine's heritage. We look forward to succulent fresh blueberries each summer. With the growing evidence that blueberries have extraordinary health benefits, we are fortunate that frozen, canned or fresh blueberries are available throughout the year.

Maine produces more wild blueberries than any other state. The low-bush berry grown in Maine is noted for its small size and sweet taste. The cultivated larger berry is also becoming more popular in Maine markets.

Nutrition Information

Studies indicate that wild blueberries help keep us healthy and may even thwart the effects of aging, particularly loss of memory and motor skills. The health benefits of blueberries stem largely from the antioxidant capacity of the blue pigments (anthocyanins), as well as other natural compounds. Blueberries have more antioxidant capacity than 40 other fruits and vegetables tested.

There is evidence that the blue in the berries may have cancer-fighting properties and protect against heart disease.

At the same time, important nutrients such as fiber, vitamin C and potassium are available in every dish of blueberries you eat. The caloric value is low and they contain no fat. A serving of blueberries is one cup raw or ½ cup cooked. Blueberries are a good choice

for meeting the "5-A-Day" guideline for vegetables and fruits.

Selection

Choose blueberries that are navy blue, and have a powdery, silver-white bloom on the skins. The berries should be plump and have smooth skins. The best berries are fully ripe, not overripe or green.

If possible, go to the fields and purchase berries during harvest season directly from the grower. Buy your supply when berries are at their peak; package, freeze and store them.

Storage

Like other fruits, blueberries are highly perishable if not held under ideal conditions. If you are buying blueberries from the market, buy them where they are kept cool. Freezer-ready berries will cost slightly more, but will save you time.

Berries purchased at a farmer's market or from the field may contain field debris. Take time to remove unwanted leaves, stems and unripe berries. Spread them on a baking sheet or paper towels so you can see what needs to be removed. After the berries are clean of debris, rinse berries in cool water and drain well in a colander. Store in the refrigerator crisper. Use within one or two weeks.

To freeze berries, pack them after rinsing and draining. Use moisture- and vapor-proof bags or boxes for long freezer storage. Mark and freeze immediately. When you want to use the berries, take out as many as you need.

If the berries are frozen, use them directly from the freezer. There's no need to thaw them if you use them in baked products, except for pancakes.

Preparation

Use fresh berries in a variety of ways. Coffee cakes, pancakes, muffins, pies, berries with sugar and milk, on cereal, and with other fruit are all-time favorites uses. If the berries are frozen, use them directly from the freezer. There's no need to thaw them if you use them in baked products, except for pancakes. Pancakes may not cook thoroughly in the center if the berries are frozen. Microwave the amount you need for a few seconds to thaw.

Blueberry Frozen Yogurt

Serves: 8 (1-cup servings)

2 cups lemon-lime flavored soda, chilled
 2 cups blueberries
 1/2 cup sugar
 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 16 ounces nonfat vanilla yogurt

Place soda, blueberries, sugar, lemon juice in a blender; process until smooth. Combine blueberry mixture and yogurt. Pour into a baking dish and then in the freezer. When frozen, serve in individual dessert dishes. A plain cookie would taste good with the yogurt.

Nutritional content per serving:

135 calories	3 g protein
32 g carbohydrates	0.1 g fat
0.8 g fiber	5 mg vitamin C
159 mg potassium	1 mg cholesterol
103 mg iron	mg calcium

Blueberry Pie

Serves: 8

Double piecrust recipe
 4 tablespoons cornstarch or flour
 5 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen
 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 1/2 to 3/4 cup sugar
 1 teaspoon margarine

Prepare a double piecrust recipe for a 9-inch pie pan. Roll half the dough and place into pan. Prepare fresh blueberries; pick over, rinse, and drain. For frozen berries, separate the fruit, but do not thaw. Combine cornstarch or flour and sugar, eliminating all lumps. Place 3 cups of berries in pie shell; add mixed dry ingredients, and then the rest of the berries. Sprinkle with lemon juice and top with the remaining sugar and cornstarch. Dot with margarine.

Roll the other half of the dough and place on pie, crimping the edges. Decorate top with steam vents. Bake in 425 degree oven for 20 minutes, reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake another 25 minutes or until the juices bubble from top.

Nutritional content per serving:

With crust:

226 calories	8 g protein
33 g carbohydrates	8 g fat
3 g fiber	13 mg vitamin C
97 mg potassium	

Without crust:

113 calories	2 g protein
28 g carbohydrates	0.8 g fat
86 mg potassium	13 mg vitamin C

Blueberry Sauce

Serves: 8 (1/4-cup servings)

2 cups fresh or frozen wild blueberries
 1/2 cup water
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 1 teaspoon lemon juice
 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

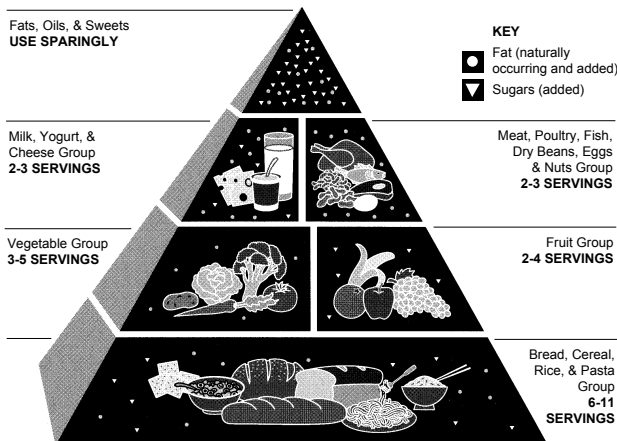
Add water to berries; heat until warm. Combine cornstarch, sugar and cinnamon; stir into berry mixture. Stir and cook until mixture is thickened and clear. Add lemon juice and mix. Use as a topping on pancakes, waffles, ice cream, pudding or angel food cake.

Nutritional content per serving:

47 calories	8 g protein
12 g carbohydrates	0.1 g fat
8 g fiber	5 mg vitamin C
3 mg calcium	
33 mg potassium	

Food Guide Pyramid

A Guide to Daily Food Choices



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