

What Makes Blueberries So Healthy?

Blueberries are perennial flowering plants of the Ericaceous family known as *Vaccinium Cyanococcus*. The flower itself is typically bell shaped and can be white, pale pink, or red. The fruit is a deep velvety purple with a fleshy characteristic.

Blueberries are sweet and juicy and can be used in a wide variety of recipes from jams, sauces, and smoothies to cakes, baked goods, and other pastries. Aside from the tasty recipes that can come together using blueberries, they are medicinal in terms having antibacterial and antiviral qualities. This succulent fruit packs quite the nutritional punch with its panel of plant nutrients.

Potent Concentrations of Antioxidants

Did you know that blueberries contain high concentrations of antioxidants, which help your body fight free radicals that kill your cells and accelerate aging? In fact, consumption of this natural medicine may even help protect your heart and brain health. Blueberries possess the highest antioxidant capacity, bar none, when compared to other fruit, veggies, and spices according to the world's healthiest foods website. Eat them raw and optimize your health by giving the body the nutrients it needs to combat free radicals that damage our cellular structures right down to the DNA.

In fact, according to [Prevent Disease.com](http://PreventDisease.com), 300 grams of blueberries puts up a strong fight against DNA damage to blood cells resulting from oxidative stress. Consuming blueberries on a regular basis may just help one bypass the rising risk of cardiovascular and other degenerative diseases.

Loaded With Phytochemical Anthocyanin

The phytochemical, anthocyanin, is present in substantial levels in blueberries and is responsible for its healing qualities involving inflammation reduction, blood pressure reduction, and the overall rise of health and longevity when consumed often. Due to the antioxidant properties of Anthocyanins, good vision can be maintained and even reserved by preventing or slowing down visual loss and other age related eye problems.

Rich in Other Vitamins and Antioxidants, Too

Anthocyanin is just one of the potent antioxidants found in blueberries. You will be surprised to learn that consuming blueberries will raise your levels of vitamin A, vitamin B, vitamin C, copper, phosphorous, selenium, zinc, and iron. These antioxidants make the blueberry the go to for a quick nutritious snack promoting health and wellbeing. The copper, for example, helps build immunity by fighting bacteria and it's required for the production of red blood cells; the zinc and iron will raise hemoglobin and oxygen in the blood to strengthen immunity.

Excellent Nutrients for Brain Health

With all the antioxidants present in blueberries, neurological disorders can be prevented and healed as the degeneration neurons and brain cells are restored to health along with the central nervous system. Adequate intake of antioxidants such as those found in blueberries can benefit Alzheimer's sufferers because they heal deteriorating brain cells and

tissues. This can work toward keeping the memory focused and sharp.

Effective Nourishment for Heart Health

There are several factors that make blueberries terrific for heart health including the high fiber content along with the high level of antioxidants found in the fruit. These factors help blueberries dissolve bad cholesterol and strengthen cardiac muscles.

Works Toward Healthy Digestion

The fiber content in blueberries, if consumed by the handful, will help keep constipation at bay, while the vitamins, minerals, and acids help correct digestive difficulties. One such vitamin is the B-complex group with folates, pantothenic acid, niacin pyridoxine, riboflavin, and folic acid. Together these allow the body to metabolize carbs, protein, and fats, ultimately promoting healthy digestion.

Low in Calories

Stay trim snacking on blueberries, as they are quite low in calories. Just under a half a cup of blueberries is only 57 calories. This is a much more health conscious choice than a processed food snack or baked good which does not offer much in terms of nutrients.

Still Potent When Frozen

Studies have shown that there isn't any damage to the antioxidant content when blueberries are frozen. When frozen for 36 months, researchers learned that the overall power of the antioxidant was not lost; this is fantastic news for those

who may have difficulty getting their hands on fresh blueberries and typically buy them frozen.

Use certified organic ingredients to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals, and preservatives. In the case of blueberries, it's best to use the organic varieties as the conventional are high in pesticides according to the EWG's Dirty Dozen list.

Blueberry Banana Smoothie/ Frozen Ice

This recipe uses 1.5 cups of frozen blueberries, 1 frozen banana, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Strauss Organic vanilla yogurt, 2 cups water and 1 cup of crushed ice. Combine ingredients in your blender to desired consistency, then enjoy a frozen treat that is packed with antioxidants and nutrients. This same recipe can be used to make blueberry banana frozen ice by pouring into ice cube tray and freezing.

Blueberry Banana Muffins

This recipe calls for $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups of flour. I like to use a combination of almond, amaranth, and quinoa flour in equal portions. This is then combined with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of whole oats, 1 teaspoon baking soda, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut oil, 3 ripe bananas, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of coconut sugar, 2 large eggs, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of almond milk, a dash of vanilla extract and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cup of frozen blueberries. Combine ingredients, bake for 30 minutes on 375.

Blueberry Flaxseed Pancakes

For this dish, combine 2 well beaten eggs with 1 cup of buttermilk, 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 1 stick of melted butter, 1 cup of your choice of gluten free flour such as

brown rice flour and or quinoa and amaranth flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ground flax seeds, 3 teaspoons of baking powder, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of honey, 2 cups of blueberries, 3 mashed up bananas and a nice pinch of cinnamon.

Blueberry Parfait

Layer your favorite oatmeal and yogurt with fresh or frozen blueberries. Top with hemp, chia, or sunflower seeds, drizzle with honey and dig in!

Blueberry Jam

Boil 3 cups of blueberries with some maple syrup. Mash the blueberries and boil down to your favorite texture, about 15 minutes. Stir often so that it does not stick. Once you have achieved your desired consistency, remove from heat, let cool, and add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of vanilla extract. This can be spread on muffins, toast, tarts, cookies, and more.

Sources:

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