



Photo by Barbara Treadwell



Pickled blueberries shown with cinnamon stick

Food for Health

These little dark-blue berries that we have so nonchalantly popped into our mouths throughout the centuries have always won our taste buds' favor. With modern medical research, they have also won our hearts and minds—and the rest of our bodies, in fact.

Blueberries have been placed in the “superfood” category. They are high on the list in antioxidant strength. Native Americans knew their value. They used the roots, leaves, and berries to treat coughs, relax mothers during childbirth, and as a blood purifier. They knew long ago what modern scientists are discovering today. Here are just a few of their benefits:

- Blueberries may help the brain reverse short-term memory loss that comes with aging and may improve motor skills.
- The compounds in blueberries may ward off cancer by strengthening cell structure.
- Blueberries may guard against heart disease and strokes.
- Recent research shows that the blueberry may be much like its relative the cranberry in preventing urinary-tract infections.
- Night vision may be improved by eating blueberries.

Berry for berry, diminutive wild blueberries pack more concentrated nutrition than cultivated berries, according to a USDA study using the ORAC procedure (Oxygen Radical Absorption Capacity). Whether wild or cultivated, both varieties are wrapped in deeply pigmented skins that contain healthful compounds that work in synergy with the vitamins and minerals inside. Small or large, blueberries are loaded with nutrients that can clearly help our bodies function better.

The After-Season

Preserving Blueberries

The bounty of summer eases into autumn and the end of the harvest season in the Midwest. The easiest way to preserve blueberries is to freeze them, but pickling is a tasty way to keep the berries or prepare them to give as gifts.

Freezing: Do not wash berries before freezing. Lay them out on a sheet pan to freeze solid individually, and then transfer them to a zipper-lock bag. Rinse right before using them.

Pickled Blueberries

| Makes 1 pint |

A nice accompaniment to cheese or meat

Ingredients

- ¾ cup **red wine vinegar**
- 1 **cinnamon stick**
- 6 whole **cloves**
- ½ cup **sugar**
- 1 pint **blueberries**

Directions

1. Bring the vinegar, cinnamon stick, and cloves to a simmer and continue to cook for a few minutes. Add the sugar and cook until dissolved.
2. Add the blueberries and bring back to a boil. As soon as it comes to a boil, pour into a jar.
3. Cool to room temperature, cover, and refrigerate.

NOTE: Allow a couple of weeks before you eat these. They go great in salads, as a relish with meats, or with cheese and cocktails. Pickled blueberries will keep in the refrigerator for 5–6 months.