Berries

Quick Facts

- Berries have high concentrations of anthocyanin, an antioxidant that may help lower blood pressure and improve blood vessel function. Studies show that eating three servings of berries per week may lower heart attack risk.

- Since berries contain mostly water, they are great for losing weight. They fill you up quickly because the high water content increase the volume while decreasing the calories. Their fiber content also aids in weight loss and helps to lower cholesterol.

- Vitamin C is a common antioxidant found in berries that helps maintain cartilage stores and aids in joint flexibility. It also contributes to radiant skin and healthy hair, and may reduce the risk of arthritis, cataracts and macular degeneration.

Shopping & Preparing

Fresh berries can be found at almost any grocery store in the produce area. They are a seasonal fruit, so they will be more plentiful, less expensive and better tasting when in season (generally when the weather is warm). Look for berries that are plump, tender and bright in color; avoid containers that are damp or stained. If the container you select happens to have a moldy or mushy berry, remove it immediately so that it doesn’t spread to the other berries. If you are picking berries from your home garden or a local farm, select ones that separate easily from their stems. Berries generally don’t ripen or get sweeter after picking, so it is important to pick them at their peak. If you can’t find fresh berries, frozen are a good substitute during the off-season months, but be sure to buy the unsweetened ones.

Commonly eaten berries include: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and cranberries. Blueberries are in season May to October; strawberries are in season April to July; raspberries are in season June to October; blackberries are in season May to August; and cranberries are in season October to December. For ideal storage, refrigerate unwashed berries, loosely covered, in a single layer (otherwise they can get crushed). Strawberries and blueberries will generally last 5 days; blackberries and raspberries will generally last 3 days. If you can’t use them in time, you can freeze the berries for later use in smoothies or sauces. Wash and pat berries dry, then arrange on a baking sheet and freeze until solid (it will take a couple of days). Transfer the frozen berries to freezer bags or freezer containers and lay flat in the freezer. Frozen berries will last up to 12 months.

Super Recipe – Banana-Berry Smoothie

Serving Size

Makes 2 servings (about 3 ¼ cups)
**Ingredients**

- 1 small banana
- 6 ounces pineapple juice
- ½ cup ice
- 6 ounces fresh or frozen blueberries
- 6 ounces fresh or frozen raspberries or blackberries
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 teaspoon grated peeled fresh ginger

**Preparation**

1. In blender, purée all ingredients until smooth.

**Nutritional Information Per Serving (about 1.5 cups)**

- 190 calories
- 1g fat (0g saturated fat)
- 0mg cholesterol
- 30mg sodium
- 47g carbohydrates
- 7g fiber
- 2g protein

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**Resources**

- [Coupon For $1.00 Off Any Regular Or Large Smoothie With Berries At Berry Blendz - South Campus Gateway](http://www.mnn.com/food/healthy-eating/stories/superfoods-11-berries-to-improve-your-health)