

## CRANBERRIES: TART TREASURES

Cranberries are more than just a holiday staple. They're a vibrant, nutrient-rich fruit with a long history and a wide range of uses. Native to North America, cranberries have been valued for centuries by Indigenous peoples for their medicinal and preservative properties. Today, they're enjoyed worldwide in juices, sauces, baked goods, and more. Cranberries are one of the few fruits native to North America, thriving in sandy bogs and marshes on low-lying vines. They're known for their unique ability to bounce, thanks to tiny air pockets inside, a trait that also helps determine their freshness. The United States is a major producer of cranberries, with Wisconsin and Massachusetts leading the way. Fresh cranberries are typically in season from fall through early winter and should be firm, plump, and deep red in color.

Cranberries are a nutritional powerhouse packed with health-promoting compounds. They are rich in vitamin C, which supports immune function and skin health, and are loaded with antioxidants that help combat inflammation and oxidative stress. Cranberries are especially known for promoting urinary tract health due to their high content of proanthocyanidins, which may help prevent bacterial adhesion. They also provide dietary fiber for digestive health, are low in calories, and have been linked to improved heart health by supporting healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

### KEY NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

- *Vitamin C - Boosts immunity and skin health.*
- *Proanthocyanidins - May prevent urinary tract infections.*
- *Low Calorie - A smart choice for weight management.*
- *Antioxidants - Help reduce inflammation & oxidative damage.*
- *Dietary Fiber - Supports digestion and gut health.*







Cranberries bring a bright, tart flavor to a wide variety of dishes, both sweet and savory. Dried cranberries add a chewy sweetness to salads and grain bowls, oatmeal, and some baked goods, while fresh or frozen berries are excellent in muffins, breads, and scones. Cranberry juice, opting for 100% juice, is a popular base for tart beverages and smoothies, and the berries themselves can be cooked down into glazes for meats like pork or chicken. Growing up my mom would make a spicy relish with cranberries, spices, and chili peppers. Canned cranberry sauce is a convenient option, especially during the holiday season, and works well in both sweet and savory dishes. Admittedly, it's on my family's Thanksgiving table every year, and is considered an indulgence as it tends to be higher in sugar. On cheese boards, cranberries pair beautifully with soft cheeses like brie or goat cheese, adding a festive and flavorful touch.

I appreciate cranberries in both sweet and savory applications. As cranberries are more tart than sweet, I may enjoy them in savory dishes more. This cranberry glazed chicken makes a flavorful, tangy, slightly sweet and juicy chicken dinner. I like to pair it with multicolor quinoa or wild rice and green beans. If you're craving a Thanksgiving dinner fix, you can serve this on top of a bed of cauliflower puree or buttermilk mashed potatoes.

Note: Since everyone's health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that's right for you.

## POPULAR CULINARY USES

***Cranberry Sauce – A holiday classic with turkey and poultry***


***Salads – Dried cranberries add sweetness and texture***

***Baked Goods – Great in muffins, breads, and scones***

***Beverages – Used in juices, cocktails, and smoothies***

***Meat Glazes – Delicious with pork, chicken, or duck***

***Cheese Boards – Pairs well with brie, goat cheese, and nuts***



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# CRANBERRY GLAZED CHICKEN

## INGREDIENTS

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries

¼ cup orange juice

1 tbsp honey

1 tsp orange zest

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 tbsp olive oil

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp ground black pepper

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine cranberries, orange juice, honey, orange zest, garlic, and apple cider vinegar.
3. Cook until cranberries burst and mixture thickens, about 10 minutes.
4. Season breasts with salt and pepper.
5. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat and sear chicken for 2-3 minutes per side.
6. Transfer chicken to a baking dish and pour glaze over the top.
7. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Serve with sauce on top

### Notes:

- For a more festive flavor, add fresh thyme on top of chicken before placing in oven. Like a little heat? Add a quarter to half of a teaspoon of crushed chili flakes to the glaze.

Chef Parul Desai, RDN

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