

# Naturally Nutritious Blog

HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS



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## Cranberry Cheer

As the winter season approaches, I find myself reaching for ingredients that bring warmth, flavor, and a festive touch to my meals. Cranberries, with their vibrant red hue and tangy flavor, are a holiday staple that can transform a dish into something truly special. This superfruit is not only beautiful but also packed with health benefits, making it perfect for healthy winter holiday meals.

Cranberries are incredibly versatile, adding a vibrant pop of color and a tart sweetness that enhances both savory and sweet dishes, from salads to main courses and even desserts. Beyond their visual appeal, cranberries are packed with antioxidants that protect our cells from oxidative stress and provide vitamin C to boost immune health during the colder months.

Their natural compounds also support heart health and aid in digestion, making them an excellent choice for staying well during the holidays. Additionally, cranberries help keep recipes low in sugar and calories, making them a healthy option for holiday gatherings. The polyphenols in cranberries have been shown to promote urinary tract health and aid in digestion, which can be especially beneficial during rich holiday meals.

One of my favorite ways to use cranberries is in a Cranberry-Pecan Mixed Grains blend—a hearty combination of whole grains, sweet-tart cranberries, and crunchy pecans. This mix is packed with the wholesome goodness of grains, fruit, and the healthy fats from the pecans, creating a satisfying texture. It's perfect as a standalone snack or as a base for a variety of dishes. The vibrant red pops of cranberries make this blend an excellent choice for adding a festive touch to any winter meal. Here's a delicious Cranberry-Pecan Mixed Grains recipe. Give it a try!



# CRANBERRY-PECAN MIXED GRAINS



## Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup pecan pieces
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion diced
- 1 cup brown rice
- 3/4 cup bulgur wheat
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 ea dried whole bay leaf
- 3 cups low sodium vegetable broth
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves washed and chopped



## Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 325 F
- On sheet pan, spread pecans in thin layer. Bake, stirring once, until lightly toasted and aromatic, 10 to 15 minutes. Cool.
- In stockpot over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add onion. Saute until onion is translucent, 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add brown rice, bulgur, cranberries, salt, pepper and bay leaves. Saute 2 minutes.
- Add broth. Bring to a boil. Stir. Reduce heat. Cover. Simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from heat. Let stand 10 minutes. Fluff with fork.
- Add toasted nuts and parsley. Toss to mix. Cover. Serve hot.

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.

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