



Blueberries

NUTRITION:

Blueberries are a very good source of vitamins A and C. They are also a good snack or dessert for calorie-conscious people, providing 42 calories per half-cup of berries.

HOW TO SELECT:

Choose plump, firm berries that are free of moisture.

STORAGE:

Fresh blueberries keep longer than any of the other berries. Store them uncovered or covered in the refrigerator for up to twelve days. Wash just before using, making sure not to soak the berries.

DRYING:

Preparation:

- Sort, wash, and leave whole. Remove stems.

Pretreatment: (none required)

- Because of tough skins on blueberries, a boiling water blanch is often used to crack the skins and improve the drying process. Dip in boiling water for 15-30 seconds, then dip into cold water. Drain on absorbent material.

Drying Procedure:

- Spread in thin layer and dry at 130-150 degrees F. until leathery.
- Store in dry air and vapor proof containers.

FREEZING:

Without washing, place blueberries in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer bags. Leave 1/2 inch of headspace for expansion during freezing. Label and date packages. At the time of use, blueberries will be individually frozen. Wash just before using.

Blueberries should not be frozen with sugar since they get tough and will be mushy when thawed. Sugar may be added when the berries are served.

Wild blueberries will be more tender if blanched 20 to 30 seconds in boiling water, then frozen like domestic berries.

CANNING:

WATER BATH CAN

Hot Pack: Wash and sort. Heat berries and sugar (1/2 cup per quart) to boiling in covered saucepan. Shake pan to prevent sticking. Pack hot berries and juice in jars and process in boiling water bath for 15 minutes for pints and quarts.

Raw Pack: Wash and sort. Pack berries in jars (shake gently to get full pack). Cover with boiling syrup to 1/2 inch headspace. Process pints for 15 minutes and quarts for 20 minutes in boiling water bath.

Fruit Juice: Wash and sort. Crush berries. Heat to simmering, then strain through cloth bag. Add sugar if desired, about 1 cup sugar to 1 gallon of juice. Reheat to simmering. Fill hot, clean jars to 1/2 inch of top with hot juice. Apply lids. Process 5 minutes for pints, quarts and 1/2-gallons in boiling water bath.

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SYRUP:

Mix 4 cups juice with 4 cups sugar. Add 1/4 cup lemon juice and 1/2 pkg. or less of powdered pectin. Heat to boiling and boil 2 minutes. Skim off foam and pour into pint or half-pint jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Apply lids and process in boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes.

JAMS/JELLIES/ PRESERVES:

Blueberries can be made into jam, either alone or in combination with other fruit. Recipes are included with commercial pectins. These recipes were developed to match the specific type of pectin and should not be changed. These products should be processed for 5 minutes in a boiling water bath to ensure safety.

BLUEBERRY PIE FILLING

6 quarts fresh or thawed blueberries	1/2 cup bottled lemon juice
6 cups granulated sugar	20 drops blue food coloring (optional)
2 1/4 cups Clear Jel®	7 drops red food coloring (optional)
7 cups cold water	

Select fresh, ripe, and firm blueberries. Unsweetened frozen blueberries may be used. If sugar has been added, rinse it off while fruit is still frozen. Wash and drain fresh blueberries. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel® in a large kettle. Stir. Add water and, if desired, food coloring. Cook on medium high heat stirring constantly. Fold in drained berries immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leave 1 1/2 inches of headspace. Adjust lids and process pints or quarts in a boiling water canner for 30 minutes. Makes 7 quarts.

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

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