

# Taste



**B**LUEBERRIES have received much favourable press over the past few years as the awareness of their incredible health benefits have been discovered.

How wonderful to have something as beautiful and delicious as ripe, juicy blueberries to eat and know that they are doing you good as well as delighting your palate.

Blueberries, which are rich in many vitamins, also contain the all important Vitamins A and C, along with the minerals zinc, potassium, iron, calcium and magnesium. They are high in fibre and low in calories and have significant levels of a natural compound with anti-cancer qualities — resveratrol.

A 1998 study, at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Centre on Ageing, in the US, revealed that the blueberry is No 1 in antioxidant activity. It is superior to 40 other fruits and vegetables in its ability to neutralise free radicals and, because of that, assist in cancer prevention, heart disease and the effects of aging.

A half-cup of blueberries offers similar antioxidant power as five fruit and vegetable servings.

They have to be the most attractive 'pill' available!!

Aside from all that, they are a fabulous berry to eat and cook with. They also freeze amazingly well. They stay separate and don't go mushy and juicy on thawing.

They are very versatile and are great combined with the other summer berry fruits, or in cakes, muffins, pancakes, jellies, sauces, fruit salad or eaten on their own.

They have a slight acid among the sweetness and I have sometimes used that property and chosen them for a savoury sauce to serve with lamb.

When choosing fresh blueberries look for ones with the powdery bloom. This bloom protects the blueberry and also indicates freshness and minimal handling.

Blueberries combine well with apples and make a delicious crumble or pie.

For a simple, stunning dessert combine them in a jelly.

For ease, use a packaged strawberry or raspberry jelly.

Dissolve the jelly in half the amount of boiling water listed in the instructions.

## Berries of bounty



### Eating in

Judith Sweet

Substitute fresh, strained orange juice for the remaining water. Some riesling or sauvignon blanc wine could also be used as an alternative liquid.

Pour the jelly into individual ramekins. Don't fill the pot, as the addition of blueberries will displace some of the jelly.

When just starting to jell add a dessert spoon of blueberries to each pot. Chill, and, when ready to serve, invert dip the ramekin into hot water and invert it on to the serving plate.

If you dampen the serving plate with cold water it will allow you to easily position the jelly. Serve with a mixture of softly whipped sweetened cream and natural yoghurt, or icecream.

### Summer berry salad

Serve this delicious salad with a vanilla panna cotta or icecream. A crisp sweet biscuit would complete the dish. You could substitute cranberry juice for the alcohol if you wish.

Vin Santo is an Italian dessert wine. I have to say that I have had great difficulty finding it in local wine stores. It is quite viscous and delicious. In Italy it is served at the end of a meal and biscotti are dipped into it and then sucked rather than chewed.

A simple summer berry salad can be made by combining:

**600 grams altogether of blueberries, blackberries and raspberries.**

**100 grams castor sugar**

**2 tablespoons vin santo, liqueur muscat or tawny port or a dessert wine.**

Wipe the berries clean

Place all the ingredients in a glass or stainless steel bowl and combine gently.

Check the sweetness and add more sugar if required.

Allow them to macerate for at least an hour before serving.

Refrigerate throughout the process.

### Blueberry cake

THIS recipe was given to me years ago by Garry Dorrington of Rockerfellars. It is delicious served warm, dusted with icing sugar. It can also double as a dessert accompanied by any of the following: A warm berry coulis or sauce, creame anglaise, icecream or softly whipped cream. This quantity makes two cakes — one for now and one for the freezer. Of course, the mixture can be halved. There is slightly more flour than usual in this cake to prevent the blueberries from falling through the mixture and ending up at the bottom of the cake.

**250 grams butter, softened**

**235 grams castor sugar**

**295 grams self-raising flour**

**Few drops vanilla extract**

**6 x 50 gram free-range eggs**

**500 grams blueberries**

Prepare 2 x 23cm flan tins or spring-form tins by greasing and lining the

base with baking paper. I like to line the base of the tin to prevent a reaction between the berries and the metal. If it is a Teflon tin this is not necessary. Preheat the oven to 180C. Cream together the butter, sugar and vanilla until the mixture is light in colour and fluffy.

Add the eggs, one at a time and combine well before adding the next egg. Fold in the flour gently. Do not over mix.

Pour the mixture, evenly, into the two prepared tins. Scatter the blueberries over the top of the mixture. Do not press in.

You will find that the mixture will rise over the berries allowing for even distribution through the cake.

Cook for about one hour or until the mixture is cooked when tested with a fine metal skewer.

Insert the skewer into the center of the cake and, if it comes out clean, the mixture is cooked.

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