

# Highbush Cranberries

**H**ighbush cranberries are shrubs that grow in most areas of Alaska in cool woods and thickets or on gravelly or rocky banks. The leaves, which are almost like maple leaves in shape, turn red in the fall. The fruit, a red or orange drupe with a flattened stone, grows in clusters on short branches. This berry is a member of the honeysuckle family but has received the cranberry name through common usage. The scientific name is *Viburnum edule*.

The ripe fruit is available in late summer and fall; it soens a er the rst frost. If picked before the rst frost, just before the true ripe stage, the fruit is more acidic in flavor. Highbush cranberries have a musty flavor and odor, but sweeten a little a er the rst frost. Berries can be picked through the winter.

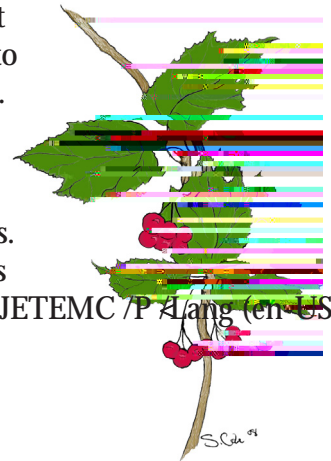
Highbush cranberries are high in vitamin A (20 percent of the recommended daily allowance per ½ cup serving), vitamin C (25 percent of the recommended daily allowance) and dietary fiber (28 percent of the recommended daily allowance). One serving (½ cup) has 60 calories.

Highbush cranberries are a rich source of antioxidants, a group of biochemicals shown to be an important part of the human diet. Research with fruits shows cultivated blueberries with a score of 24, which is higher than other commercial fruits studied. Anything above 40 is considered very high. High-

bush cranberries score much higher at 174. When the berries are processed, antioxidant levels change, but they are still high compared to other fruits (see chart below).

Highbush cranberries make a beautiful jelly and are popular in many products.

The berries aren't used in pies and other baked goods be.9TJETEMC / P Lang (en-US) / MCID



Fruit leather	620	Canned fruit	80
Frozen fruit	160	Sauce	70
Frozen juice	150	Syrup	50
Canned juice	110	Jam	50

### **How to Freeze**

Choose firm berries with glossy skins. Remove any stems or leaves and sort out shriveled berries. Wash, only if needed, and drain before packaging into freezer containers. Berries can be spread in a single layer on a cookie sheet and placed in the freezer. When frozen, transfer to freezer bags or containers. Properly frozen berries will last up to two years before their quality will begin to deteriorate.

### **How to Dry**

Because of the large seed, highbush cranberries are not suitable for drying. However, the puree can be made into an excellent fruit leather.

### **How to Extract Juice**

Combine 4 cups clean highbush cranberries with 1 cup water. Crush berries and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain through a jelly bag or layers of cheesecloth. For clear juice, do not twist or press jelly bag or cheesecloth. For long-term storage, the juice should be frozen or canned. *Yield: 2 cups juice*

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#### *Hot pack for juice*

Sterilize canning jars. Heat juice, stirring occasionally, until it begins to boil. Pour into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner.

*Pints or quarts* 5 minutes

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### **To Prepare Puree**

Combine 4 cups cleaned highbush cranberries with 1 cup water. Crush berries and simmer for 10 minutes. Force through a medium sieve or food mill. Discard seeds and skins. *Yield: 2 cups puree*

To freeze: Pack into rigid containers leaving ½ inch headspace for expansion. Seal and freeze.

To can: Fill hot jars with hot puree, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Process quarts or pints in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes.

### **Spiced Highbush Cranberry Freezer Jam**

1 cup highbush cranberry puree  
1 cup apple juice  
3 ounces frozen orange juice concentrate  
¼ teaspoon cloves  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
3½ cups sugar  
6 ounces liquid pectin

Combine puree, apple juice, orange juice concentrate, spices and sugar in a saucepan. Heat to just 110 degrees F, stirring constantly until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat. Add liquid pectin. Stir well. Ladle jam into freezer containers; cover with tight lids. Cool until set; freeze. *Yield:* 5–6 cups

### **Highbush Cranberry Apple Butter**

2 quarts highbush cranberries  
1 cup water  
4 cups unsweetened applesauce  
6 cups sugar  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon cloves  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 lemon, grated rind and juice

Boil berries and water together until berries pop and are soft. Put through a sieve or food mill to remove seeds. Reheat and add the applesauce, sugar, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Simmer until thick. Remove from heat and add the lemon juice and grated rind. Spoon apple butter into jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and cover with two-piece lids. Process for 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. *Yield:* 8 cups

### **Spiced Highbush Cranberry Sauce or Ketchup**

6 cups highbush cranberries  
1½ teaspoons celery salt  
1½ teaspoons salt  
1½ teaspoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoon pepper  
2 cups sugar  
1½ teaspoons allspice  
½ cup water  
1½ cups onions, chopped  
1 cup cider vinegar  
1½ teaspoons ground cloves

Cook the cranberries in the water until soft, then put through a food mill or a sieve to remove seeds. Add the onions, vinegar, sugar and spices. Boil until the mixture thickens and reaches the proper consistency. Immediately pour ketchup into hot canning jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and cover with two-piece lids. Process for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. Serve this cranberry sauce with poultry or meat or use in baked beans. *Yield:* 4 cups

### **UAF Cooperative Extension Service Resources**

*Jams and Jellies* – FNH-00730

*Canning Overview* – FNH-00705

**To process in a boiling water canner,  
follow these steps:**

Fill the canner halfway with water. Place empty jars in canner to heat until needed. Preheat water to a low boil. Place filled jars, fitted with lids, into the canner on the rack. Add more boiling water, if needed, so the water level is at least 1 inch above jar tops. Cover with the canner lid and turn heat to its highest position until water boils vigorously. When the water boils, set a timer for the recommended processing time indicated in the recipe. Lower heat setting to maintain a gentle boil throughout the processing time.

When the jars have been boiled for the recommended time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Using a jar lifter, remove the jars and place them on a towel, leaving at least 1 inch

