

Blueberries

Blueberries have long been known as one of the healthiest fruits available in this part of the world. They are low in calories – about 80 calories per cup – yet high in nutrition. These little berries are a good source of fiber, vitamin C, potassium and vitamin K. They are also high in antioxidants, which protect your body against damage from things like the sun, pollution, or anything that threatens to damage your cells.



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In fact, blueberries are thought to have one of the highest antioxidant levels of the common fruits and vegetables. One antioxidant, anthocyanin, has shown strong evidence in protecting your cells from everyday damage.

Here are some impressive numbers:

- a study in 93,600 nurses found that a high intake of anthocyanins was linked to a 32% reduced risk for heart attacks.
- 168 people consumed 34 ounces of a blueberry and apple juice blend daily for four weeks; at the end of the study damage to the cells from oxidative stress was reduced by 20%.
- eating one-half cup blueberries daily for eight weeks lowered LDL (bad) cholesterol 27% and lowered blood pressure by 4-6% in participants
- a six year study in over 16,000 older people found that eating blueberries and strawberries was linked to delays in mental aging by up to 2.5 years
- anthocyanins in blueberries have been linked to lowering insulin resistance; in studies blood sugar levels do not rise as high after eating blueberries compared to most other fruits due in part to its fiber content at 3.6 grams per cup

Adding Blueberries to Your Diet

Blueberries are a very versatile fruit. They are wonderful ripe and washed right off the vine, but can also be included in fruit crisps or pies, muffins or coffee cakes. They provide natural sweetness when added to cereals, fruit salads and smoothies, mixed green salads, yogurt, waffles or pancakes like the recipe below. For more recipes like this one please visit www.blueberrycouncil.org.

Sheet Pan Blueberry Pancakes

2 Tbsp. canola oil	1 ½ cups flour
2 Tbsp. sugar	2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda	1 1/3 cups buttermilk
2 eggs	1 tsp. lemon zest
2 cups fresh blueberries	Maple syrup

Preheat oven to 425F. Grease 9x13 inch baking pan. In large bowl, stir flour, sugar, baking powder and baking soda together. In separate bowl, whisk buttermilk, eggs, lemon zest and oil together. Combine the wet and dry ingredient just until mixed – do not over-stir. Let stand for 10 minutes. Pour into prepared pan. Top with one cup of berries and bake for 10-12 minutes (or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean). Cut into 16 pieces; serve pancakes with remaining blueberries and syrup if desired.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 145 calories, 6 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 250 mg sodium, 19 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 2 grams protein.