

Extension

Seasonal Eating
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Festive Cranberries
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Bright red and green. The colors of the holidays are everywhere in December. In the food world this means cranberries. These tart, colorful, versatile jewels of late fall are found in so many of the holiday treats. From cranberry breads and cookies to pork roasts and gelatin salads, cranberries add a refreshing flavor and color to the season.

Fresh cranberries are only in season in the late fall so put some packages in the freezer now to use throughout the year. The dried cranberries are available year round but are great for many holiday goodies. Try making your favorite chocolate chip cookie dough and add white chocolate chips, nuts and dried cranberries for a colorful holiday twist.

During the holidays we are all looking for easy dishes to take to parties or put out for our family and friends. The Festive Cranberry Appetizer Spread recipe below is perfect when you need an appetizer. You simply boil the water, sugar and cranberries until they pop and add some apricot preserves and lemon juice for flavor. Let it cool and add toasted almonds for crunch just before pouring over cream cheese to serve with crackers. There will be enough cranberry mixture for several blocks of cream cheese. You can make the cranberry mixture up several days ahead and store in the refrigerator, adding the almonds just before serving. We used this recipe in a Valentine Sweetheart Dinner class that we taught several years ago so it works well for many holidays and parties.

This recipe is one of over 430 in our new cookbook of all of the recipes from the School of Gourmet Arts classes that we taught for six years. So if you are looking for a special holiday menu or a gift for someone who likes to cook, stop by the Extension Office on Midland Road for a local twist on your holiday cooking with the “Celebrating the Art of Good Food” book. With menus, notes, tips and serving suggestions, it will be a valuable resource for any kitchen. All of the proceeds from the \$20 book support local Extension programming for the community.

As we approach the end of the year, all of us at the UT Extension Office wish you happy season’s eating and we look forward to serving you in 2014.

For recipes, holiday ideas and more, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>) and click on Seasonal Eating. The Seasonal Eating Cooking Demonstrations will start again in January.

Festive Cranberry Appetizer Spread

1 cup water
1 cup sugar
1 (12-ounce) bag fresh or frozen cranberry
1/2 cup apricot preserves
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted
2 (8 ounce) blocks cream cheese
Crackers

In a saucepan, bring water and sugar to a boil over medium heat without stirring boil for 5 minutes. Add cranberries, cook for 10-15 minutes or until berries pop and sauce is thickened. Remove from the heat. Cut apricots in the preserves into small pieces add to cranberry mixture. Stir in lemon juice. Cool. Add almonds just before serving. Spoon over cream cheese blocks and serve with crackers.