

Seasonal Eating
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Cranberries Steal the Season
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One of the treasures of late fall is the arrival of fresh cranberries. Only available during the holidays until around February, fresh cranberries are a great addition to holiday meals.

Fresh cranberries are very tart and therefore rarely eaten raw, although perfectly safe to eat. Cooked, they pair well in both savory and sweet dishes. Sauces made with cranberries complement pork and poultry especially. It can be a jellied sauce with a lot of sugar like thanksgiving cranberry sauce or a cooked sauce with more savory ingredients like balsamic vinegar, cranberry juice or red wine. A homemade cranberry sauce can also be used to top cream cheese for an easy appetizer with crackers or you can put chunks of brie cheese in phyllo cups and top with cranberry sauce, baking until melty, for a hot appetizer.



But cranberries also star in baked goods like muffins, scones and quick breads. My mom's favorite quick bread was cranberry orange. It is this combination of citrus with cranberries that shows up in many recipes, including the coffee cake recipe below. This coffee cake is a perfect holiday breakfast or brunch dish for a party or for company or just the family. The cranberries are tossed with a little flour to keep them from sinking in the batter. They create little pockets that burst with tart cranberry flavor as you eat the cake.

To have fresh cranberries available when desired, I always buy a few extra bags to throw in the freezer. Don't rinse them before freezing and they won't stick to each other. They'll store for at least a year in the freezer until they're available fresh again.

So grab some fresh cranberries for sauces and baking this season and freeze some for later. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Cranberry Orange Coffee Cake

1/2 cup butter, room temperature
Zest of 2 oranges
1 cup sugar
1 egg, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups flour
2 cups fresh cranberries
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon coarse sugar (or regular granulated sugar)

Cream the butter and orange zest with the sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until combined. Place the flour in a bowl. Remove 2 tablespoons to another bowl and toss with the cranberries and set aside. To the flour, whisk in the baking powder and salt. Add the flour mixture a little at a time, alternating with the buttermilk. Fold in the cranberries coated in flour. Pour into a greased 9" square baking dish and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with the coarse sugar. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Check for done-ness by touching the top gently to see if it springs back or by inserting a toothpick to see if it comes out clean. If necessary, return to oven and check every five minutes or so until done (may take an addition 10-15 minutes). Let cool 15 minutes before cutting and serving.