

Highbush Cranberries

Highbush cranberries are shrubs that grow in most areas of Alaska in cool woods and thickets or on gravely 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 not really a cranberry but has received the name through common usage. The scientific name is *Viburnum edule*.

The ripe fruit is available in late summer and fall; it softens after the first frost. If picked before the first frost, just before the true ripe stage, the fruit is more acidic and has a better flavor. Highbush cranberries have a musty flavor and odor.

Highbush cranberries are high in vitamin A (20 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance), 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. Highbush 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 because of the large, flat seeds. However, they combine well with other fruits and when used with less plentiful berries like raspberries, currants and rose hips enhance their flavor. They also combine well with rhubarb, apples and lemons.

How to Clean and Store

Spread a clean, dry, terry cloth towel over a slanted surface, such as a cutting board, with one end propped up a few inches above the other. Gently roll the berries down the towel; most of the debris and leaves will cling to the towel while the berries roll

Oxygen radical absorption capacity (ORAC) for highbush cranberry products. ORAC values indicate overall antioxidant activity.

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

off. Highbush cranberries should be stored covered in the refrigerator and will keep three to four days. Store in shallow containers to prevent crushing the berries.

How to Freeze

Choose firm berries with glossy skins. Remove any stems or leaves and sort out shriveled berries. Wash, 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.

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*

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

- **To sterilize canning jars**, boil in water for 5 minutes.
- **To prepare two-piece lids** (rings and tops), wash, rinse and keep in hot water until ready to use.
- **If less sugar is desired** in recipes calling for pectin, be sure to use no-sugar-needed pectin and follow the instructions on the box.
- **To use a boiling water canner**, see instructions on page 4.

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. The puree should be frozen for long-term storage as canning is not a safe method of preserving. *Yield: 2 cups puree*

Recipes

Highbush Cranberry Rhubarb Orange Juice

2 cups highbush cranberry juice
2 cups rhubarb juice*
2 cup reconstituted orange juice
½ cup sugar

Combine all ingredients and chill before serving.

Yield: 6 cups

*To extract rhubarb juice: Cut rhubarb into ¼-inch pieces. Measure 4 cups cut rhubarb into a glass or plastic bowl or a stainless steel saucepan. Boil 2½ cups water and pour over rhubarb. Cover bowl or pan and let rhubarb and water stand for at least 6 hours. Strain through a jelly bag or a cheesecloth-lined sieve or colander. Do not squeeze.

Yield: 2½ cups

Rhubarb juice may also be extracted with a steam juicer. Follow the manufacturer's direction for steam juicing rhubarb.

Highbush Cranberry Jelly

5 cups highbush cranberry juice
7 cups sugar
3 ounces liquid pectin

Sterilize jars and prepare lids. Open liquid pectin pouch and stand upright in a cup or glass. Combine juice and sugar in a large saucepan. Place on high heat; stir constantly and bring to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Add the liquid pectin and heat again to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and quickly skim off foam. Immediately pour hot jelly into hot canning jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and cover with prepared two-piece lids. Process for 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

Yield: 8–10 cups

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°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

Prepare jar lids. 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 prepared 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 fine
1 cup cider vinegar
1½ teaspoons ground cloves

Prepare jar lids. 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 prepared 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 – Lesson 5, Food Preservation Series, FNH-00562E
Canning Overview – Lesson 2, Food Preservation Series, FHN-00562B
Using Alaska's Wild Berries and Other Wild Edibles (\$15), FNH-00120
Fruit Leather, FNH-00228
Canning Basics DVD (\$5), FNH-01280
Jams and Jellies DVD (\$5), FNH-01290

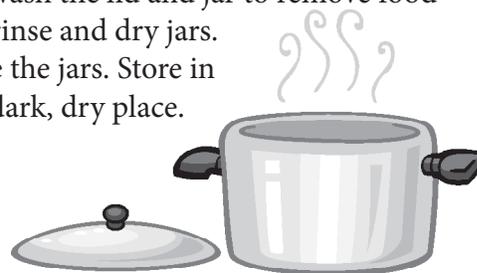
To process in a boiling water canner, follow these steps:

Fill the canner halfway with water. 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. 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. Cover with the canner lid and lower heat setting to maintain a gentle boil throughout the processing time. Add more boiling water, if needed, to keep the water level above the jars.

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 of space between the jars during cooling.

After cooling jars for 12 to 24 hours, remove the screw bands and test seals. Press the middle of the lid with a finger. If the lid springs up when finger is released, the lid is unsealed. If a lid fails to seal on a jar, remove the lid and check the jar-sealing surface for tiny nicks. If necessary, change the jar, add a new, properly prepared lid and reprocess within 24 hours using the same processing time. Alternately, adjust headspace to 1½ inches and freeze, or store in the refrigerator and use within three days.

If lids are tightly sealed on cooled jars, remove screw bands, wash the lid and jar to remove food residue, then rinse and dry jars. Label and date the jars. Store in a clean, cool, dark, dry place.



www.uaf.edu/ces or 1-877-520-5211

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