



Eat a Colorful Variety of Fruits & Vegetables Every Day

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Fruit & Vegetable of the Month



Fruit of the Month: Cherries



Cherries are drupes, or stone fruits, related to plums and more distantly to peaches and apricots. They have been enjoyed since the Stone Age—pits were found in several Stone Age cave sites in Europe. The Romans carried cherries throughout Europe and England along the routes of their conquest.

Cherries are grown in several regions of this country, but seventy percent of the cherries in the United States come from four states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah).

Varieties

There are two main types of cherries: sweet and sour. Sour cherries are lower in calories and higher in vitamin C and beta carotene than sweet cherries.

Sour

Montgomery

This variety is the best known sour cherry. It is mostly canned or frozen for use as pie filling or sauce. They are grown mostly in the eastern and Midwestern states.

Sweet

Bing

This variety is the best known sweet cherry. It is large, round, extra-sweet and has a purple-red flesh and a deep red skin that is close to black when fully ripe. The Bing is available from the end of May until early August.

Lambert

This variety is the second most popular sweet cherry. It

Cherries

Serving Size 1/2 cup (70g)

Amounts Per Serving

Calories 45
 Calories from Fat 0
 Total Fat 0g
 Saturated Fat 0g
 Cholesterol 0mg
 Sodium 0mg
 Total Carbohydrate 11g
 Dietary Fiber 2g
 Sugars 10g
 Protein 1g
 Vitamin A
 Vitamin C
 Calcium
 Iron

is smaller than the Bing and is more heart shaped. It has a dark-red skin and a rich flavor. Lamberts are available a bit longer than the Bing, usually until the end of August.

* Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of 2,000 calories.

Rainier

This variety is sweet with a yellow or pinkish skin. It is milder and sweeter than the Bing. This variety is grown in limited quantities.

Royal Ann

This variety has a blush-yellow skin and is often canned or made into maraschino cherries.

Selection

Buy cherries that have been kept cool and moist, as flavor and texture both suffer at warm temperatures. Cherries have a limited growing season and any fresh cherries grown in the United States sold after August probably came from cold storage. Small quantities of sweet cherries are imported from New Zealand during the winter months, but these may be difficult to find.

At the market, pick a handful of cherries at a time and only select the best fruit. This may be time-consuming, but the reward will be better cherries. Good cherries should be large (one inch or more in diameter), glossy, plump, hard and dark-colored for their variety. Buy cherries with stems on — they should be fresh and green. Reject undersized cherries or those that are soft or flabby. Avoid fruit that is bruised or has cuts on the dark surface.

If you find many damaged fruits at the market, consider buying cherries somewhere else, as a number of spoiled cherries will start the others to decay.



Storage

Loosely pack unwashed cherries in plastic bags or pour them into a shallow pan in a single layer and cover with plastic wrap to minimize bruising. Store cherries in the refrigerator and good condition should last up to a week. Check the fruit occasionally and remove the cherries that have gone bad. Wash the fruit before eating.

You can freeze cherries by rinsing and draining thoroughly, spreading them out in a single layer on a cookie sheet and placing in the freezer overnight. Once the cherries are frozen, transfer them to a heavy plastic bag. The frozen fruit may be kept up to a year.

Preparation

Most cherries bought at the market are eaten raw, alone or accompanied by other fruits. Simply wash the fruit and serve with the stems.



For cooking, pit cherries either by hand or with a pitter. Poaching is the most common form of preparation. Drop cherries into a small amount of simmering water, or a combination of water and wine, and cook for one to three minutes until soft. Poach using the formula of one cup liquid to two cups cherries.

Recipes

Fresh Northwest Cherry Salsa

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables

Source: Produce for Better Health

Ingredients

2 cups pitted fresh or frozen sweet cherries
1/3 cup Basil, fresh, chopped
1/3 cup Green peppers, finely chopped
2 tsp Lemon juice
1/2 tsp each of: Worcestershire sauce and grated lemon peel
1/4 tsp Salt
Dash of bottled hot pepper sauce

Chop cherries in food processor or manually. Combine all ingredients; mix well. Refrigerate 1 hour.

Nutritional Analysis: Calories 124, Protein 0g, Fat 0 G, Of Calories From Fat 2%, Cholesterol 5 G, Sodium 168 Mg.

Grilled Salmon Cherry Sauce

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables

Source: Northwest Cherry Growers

Ingredients

3 cups pitted Northwest fresh sweet cherries
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup dry white wine
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
2 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp freshly grated lemon peel
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes



In large saucepan, combine all ingredients; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce and simmer, uncovered, 30 minutes or until mixture thickens, stirring frequently. Great served with grilled salmon.

Nutritional Analysis: Calories 172, Protein 2g, Total Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 5%, Carbohydrate 36g, Cholesterol 0mg, Fiber 4g, Sodium 370mg.

Cherry and Smoked Turkey Salad

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals 1 cup of fruit or vegetables

Source: Northwest Cherry Growers

Ingredients

12 oz smoked turkey, sliced
2 cups fresh sweet cherries, pitted

1 mango,* pared and sliced
 1 kiwi fruit, sliced
 1 cup Napa cabbage, shredded
 Spicy Dressing

Arrange turkey, cherries, mango and kiwi fruit on shredded Napa cabbage. Drizzle Spicy over salad.

Spicy Dressing: Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and 1 clove crushed garlic until hot but smoking; cool and remove garlic. Add 2 tablespoons balsamic or red wine vinegar and 1 tablespoon each honey and hot dry mustard** and ½ tsp each ground ginger and salt; m Makes about 1/3 cup.

*One large nectarine may be substituted for mango.

**One tablespoon of your favorite mustard may be substituted.

Nutritional Analysis: Calories 230, Protein 10g, Fat 9g, Percent Calories From Fat 35%, (20mg, Carbohydrates 32g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 400mg.

Cherry Pepper Salad

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals 1 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetables

Source: Northwest Cherry Growers

Ingredients

1 cup Northwest fresh sweet cherries, pitted
 1 cup each thinly sliced sweet yellow and green peppers
 ¼ cup thinly sliced mild chili pepper
 2 Tbsp finely chopped onion
 2 Tbsp white wine vinegar
 1 Tbsp olive oil
 1 tsp sugar
 salt and pepper to taste
 1 Tbsp pickled ginger strips, optional
 4 cups mixed greens



Toss together all ingredients except greens; refrigerate 1 hour or longer. Serve on mixed

Nutritional Analysis: Calories 127, Protein 3g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 27%, Carbohydrate 20mg, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 541mg.

Southwestern Style Cherry Slaw

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals 2 cups of fruit or vegetables

Source: Northwest Cherry Growers.

Ingredients


Slaw:
 4 cups shredded green cabbage
 3 cups sweet cherries, pitted and halved
 2 cups torn fresh spinach leaves
 1 cup shredded jicama
 1 cup shredded carrot
 ½ cup snipped fresh cilantro
 ½ cup diced red onion

Dressing:

2 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
2 Tbsp frozen lime juice concentrate, thawed
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
½ tsp lime zest
¼ tsp each chili powder, ground cumin and salt

In large serving bowl, combine ingredients for Slaw. In small saucepan, combine dressing ingredients; heat to boil. Pour over salad and toss gently to coat.

Nutritional Analysis: Calories 158, Protein 3g, Fat 6g, Calories From Fat 29%, Carbohydrate 29g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 126mg.

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