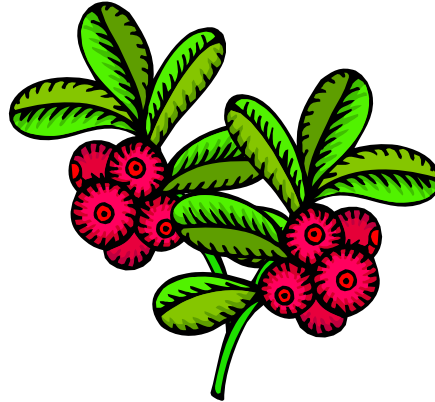




## Cranberries for the Holidays

The cranberry is one of only a few fruits native to North America. The Native Americans had used cranberries for medicinal purposes and as a natural dye for rugs, blankets and clothing long before the early settlers arrived.



### In the Market

The wild cranberry has been replaced by cultivated varieties that are larger, glossier and more flavorful. Most cranberries in the United States are grown in Wisconsin and Massachusetts.

Cranberries were plentiful in Massachusetts in 1620 and there is speculation that they may have been served at the first Thanksgiving dinner, although we have no way of knowing for sure. Today it is certainly found on most Thanksgiving menus.

Cranberries are most often thought of as a garnish for Thanksgiving turkey, but are actually a versatile food that can be used in casseroles and stews as well as desserts.

### Nutritional Content

Cranberries are low in calories, about 47 calories per cup raw, and a good source of vitamin C. Because they are so tart, cranberries are often made into sweetened sauces and juices adding more calories. They are fat free, sodium free and a good source of fiber.

Only about ten percent of the crop is sold fresh and the rest is sold either in juice or canned cranberry sauce. Fresh cranberries are most plentiful September through December for the holiday season.

### Using Cranberries

Cranberries store well and can be frozen in plastic bags for future use. The frozen berries can be cooked without thawing.

Clean cranberries by placing them in a basin of cold water, twigs, leaves and unripe berries will float to the surface and can easily be discarded.

Cranberries are too tart to eat raw or unsweetened. They are often combined with a sweeter fruit, such as apples or pears so very little sugar is needed.

