



## WHAT ABOUT BERRIES?

Berries such as strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants and brambles are a delicious way to increase your fruit intake, and are key ingredients for good health.

Berries are known to have considerable health benefits and contain high amounts of compounds that are thought to be protective against disease.

What's more, not only are berries tasty and good for you, but they can be grown right here in Scotland, with the soft fruit grown here in Scotland amongst the best of its kind. Berries can be an everyday item without being expensive or difficult to prepare. They can be eaten in many different ways, providing a simple, attractive and healthy choice.

## BERRY HEALTHY

It is generally accepted that people who consume a diet high in fruit and vegetables have a lower risk of developing heart disease or cancer. There are many compounds found in fruit and vegetables that may help to protect against disease and berries in particular contain high amounts of these potentially protective compounds

Berries are particularly rich in vitamins, including vitamins C and E, and minerals such as potassium and folate.

They also contain high amounts of phenolic compounds e.g flavonols.

These compounds are thought to have antioxidant properties, protecting the body against damaging free radicals that can cause disease. Berries contain higher levels of antioxidants than most other fruits.

In Finland berries played an important part in improving the health of the population. The North Karelia project was a public health programme adopted by Finland in 1972 to combat their high rate of heart disease and high fat diet – a health record very similar to Scotland's. A major campaign was launched to increase consumption of soft fruits, and although only a small part of a wider public health initiative, reaped considerable benefits.

Fruit and vegetable consumption in Finland increased from about 20 kg per person annually in 1972 to 50 kg in 1992. Soft fruit products are now part of the staple diet in Finland and school children and adults alike eat a range of berries on a regular basis.

# BERRY TASTY

Berries are extremely versatile and can be used in many different ways, both in sweet and savoury dishes.

Why not try including berries in salads, or making delicious healthy fruit smoothies.

Berries make an ideal topping for cereals and make a healthy, quick dessert when combined with yoghurt.

## STRAWBERRY GRANITA

The perfect summer dessert

- ▶ 1LB STRAWBERRIES
- ▶ 2OZ CASTOR SUGAR
- ▶ 3 TBS LEMON JUICE

Blend the strawberries in a food processor until smooth, then add the sugar and blend again very briefly.

Add 1pint (570 ml) water and the lemon juice and mix well.

Pour the mixture through a sieve and collect the juice in a plastic box. Cover with a lid and place this in the freezer. Remove at 30 minute intervals, giving it a mix with a wooden spoon. Do this over a four-hour period. Each stirring will break the ice crystals down into even smaller pieces until you end up with a crunchy sorbet texture. Serve with a selection of berries e.g. strawberries, raspberries, red or black currants.

## VERY BERRY SMOOTHIE

The tasty and refreshing pure fruit drink  
100ml apple juice

- ▶ 1 CUP RASPBERRIES (OR ANY OTHER BERRY)
- ▶ 1 CUP BLUEBERRIES (OR ANY OTHER BERRY)
- ▶ 1 BANANA

Place all ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth. Serve cold

## FRUIT BRULEE

The healthy alternative to crème brûlée, using a mixture of berries to add colour and flavour.

- ▶ 4 TBS OF LOW FAT OR GREEK YOGHURT
- ▶ 125G MIXED BERRIES (FRESH OR FROZEN)
- ▶ 1 TBS LIGHT BROWN SUGAR (CONTAINING A PINCH OF CINNAMON)

Place a handful of mixed berries in the bottom of small individual dishes.

Spoon yoghurt over the berries until covered.

Sprinkle with sugar/cinnamon mix.

Place under a hot grill until the sugar melts. Allow sugar to set and serve.

## SUMMER PUDDING

- ▶ 8 SLICES OF WHITE OR WHOLEMEAL BREAD, CRUSTS REMOVED
- ▶ 1.5 TO 2 LB MIXED BERRIES  
E.G. STRAWBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, BLACKCURRANTS, REDCURRANTS (FRESH OR FROZEN).
- ▶ 1 OZ CASTOR SUGAR
- ▶ 3 TBS WATER

Line a 2-pint bowl with the bread, keeping a slice or two for the lid. Simmer the berries, water and sugar gently until the juices run. Put the fruit into the bread-lined bowl, and cover with extra bread. Place a plate small enough to go just inside the basin on top of the bread lid, and weigh it down (use storecupboard tins). Refrigerate overnight. Turn out on to a plate and pour the extra juice over the top. Serve with yoghurt or low fat creme fraîche

# “BERRIED” TREASURE

Strawberries are ideal for growing at home even if you don't have a garden.

Pots and cans are perfect containers for growing strawberries. All you need is

- ▶ 1. STRAWBERRY PLANTS
- ▶ 2. POTS OR CANS
- ▶ 3. POTTING COMPOST

The potting process is quite easy and takes only minutes.

When planting make sure the crown – the point at which roots and leaves join – is just above the level of the soil.

Place the container in a sunny position and turn them 180 degrees twice a week so that the plant gets exposed to sunlight evenly.

If you feed and water the plants regularly, you'll have lots of fruit all summer long.

### ▶ BERRY INTERESTING

Strawberries and blackcurrants have more vitamin C than oranges.

Eating only 8 strawberries will give the recommended daily amount of Vitamin C.

### ▶ THE PERFECT DAY OUT

Why not pick your own. Many fruit farms across the country offer the chance to “Pick your own” fruit. Try to find a local farmer who grows berries in your area. They are usually found during early summer.

# IT'S ALL IN THE PREPARATION

Store berries in the refrigerator, covered or in the salad compartment.

Allow berries to come to room temperature before serving, to enjoy them at their best.

Always wash soft fruit before use and remove the husks and leaves if using in a recipe.

If possible prepare the fruit at the last minute to preserve the goodness

### ▶ FRESH OR FROZEN

To be able to eat berries at any time of the year, why not freeze them or buy them frozen.

Most berries can be frozen whole, but first remove any leaves or stalks.

Freeze berries soon after picking to retain maximum freshness.

Research has shown that frozen fruit retains all of the goodness of fresh.

### ▶ TOP TIP

The natural way to snack. Berries make ideal finger food and are great for lunch boxes and snacks. Or why not try berry kebabs – alternate berries and grapes on a skewer.



# Want to find out more?

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Berry Scotland provides information on all aspects of Scottish berries, including their health benefits, where to buy them, and what to do with them ([www.berryscotland.com](http://www.berryscotland.com))

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More information on North Karelia is available from the website of Finland's Public Health Institute  
[www.ktl.fi/index.en.html](http://www.ktl.fi/index.en.html)

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and "The Finnish Experience", a report on a visit to North Karelia by a delegation recruited by the Scottish Community Diet Project, is available on [www.dietproject.org.uk](http://www.dietproject.org.uk)

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There are a number of useful sources of help and support for community growers.

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The National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens  
[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

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Thrive [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk)

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and the Scottish Allotment and Gardeners Society  
[www.sags.org.uk/index.php4](http://www.sags.org.uk/index.php4) are all worth making contact with.

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For more berry recipes why not take a look at  
[www.gingerich.com/BerryList.html](http://www.gingerich.com/BerryList.html)  
[www.oregon-berries.com/cx5/cx5.htm](http://www.oregon-berries.com/cx5/cx5.htm)

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Or you can get other delicious and healthy recipes at the Healthyliving website ([www.healthylivingscotland.gov.uk](http://www.healthylivingscotland.gov.uk)).  
And finally information on providing healthy options in the catering sector is available from the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme, [www.shcas.co.uk](http://www.shcas.co.uk)

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Royal Exchange House, 100 Queen Street,  
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Website: [www.shcas.co.uk](http://www.shcas.co.uk)  
[www.dietproject.org.uk](http://www.dietproject.org.uk)

Published by the Scottish Consumer Council