



## About Blueberries History

Blueberries are indigenous to North America. Native Americans ate them in season and used them in a variety of recipes, year-round. They also used them dried with a particular type of beef jerky and often put them in soups and stews. Blueberries were revered as the “star berries” because of the perfect five-pointed star formed by the calyx at the blossom end of the berry. It is said that the Great Spirit sent blueberries to earth to relieve starving children’s hunger.

It is documented that the Wampanoag Indians shared their knowledge of planting native crops, including corn and blueberries, with European settlers. It is believed that a pudding made with cracked corn and blueberries may have been served at the first Thanksgiving.

## The Plant

One serving of blueberries contains almost 25% of the daily requirement of vitamin C. Blueberries are a great source of dietary fiber, which benefits heart health and maintains healthy cholesterol levels. Blueberries contain antioxidants, which neutralize free radicals. This can provide benefits, such as preventing cancer and lessening the risk of contracting cardiovascular disease and other age-related conditions, including Alzheimer’s disease.

## How to Buy

Blueberries are in season during the summer months, but they can be found in the market year-round, shipped from distant warm climates. Choose dark-colored berries that look firm, plump, and dry with silvery sheen. Size does not matter. Berries that are red or whitish in color are not ripe, but they can be used in cooking. Don’t buy berries that are shriveled or moldy. Avoid containers that are leaking juice.

## How to Prepare

Fresh blueberries are versatile for cooking. They are great added raw to fruit and vegetable salads. They are often used in baked goods and can be cooked into sauces and glazes for meats. They add color and flavor to healthy drinks.

It is best not to wash blueberries until just before eating. Water will accelerate the breakdown of the fruit.

## How to Store

Refrigerate fresh blueberries immediately in their original container. Wash blueberries just before use and use them within 10 days of purchase. Blueberries can be preserved by several methods. They are easily frozen, canned, or dried. For more information, refer to the University of Georgia’s National Center for Food Preservation ([www.uga.edu/nchfp/](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/)).

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