

Cherries: A sweet treat for you and your health

Cherry season is here again! These super-sweet fruits are often associated with fancy desserts, but fresh cherries are also packed with antioxidants and nutrients that contribute to good health. Read on to learn about the many health benefits of this superfood!

Got Antioxidants? Cherries do! In fact, cherries rank among the top 20 foods with the highest concentration of antioxidants. The standard one-cup serving of cherries can hold up to 4,873 antioxidants, which occur naturally in foods and may protect cells in the body from damage caused by free radicals (or unstable molecules) in order to reduce the onset of many chronic diseases, including cancer.

The Anti-Inflammatory: Eating cherries may help alleviate pain and inflammation associated with arthritis and gout (the most severe form of arthritis). A 2004 study by UC-Davis researchers found that participants who ate 45 sweet cherries during breakfast had decreased blood plasma levels and increased the amount of uric acid removed through urine. Because gout attacks occur when uric acid accumulates in the joints, these two changes are a healthy sign of an immune system fighting inflammation.

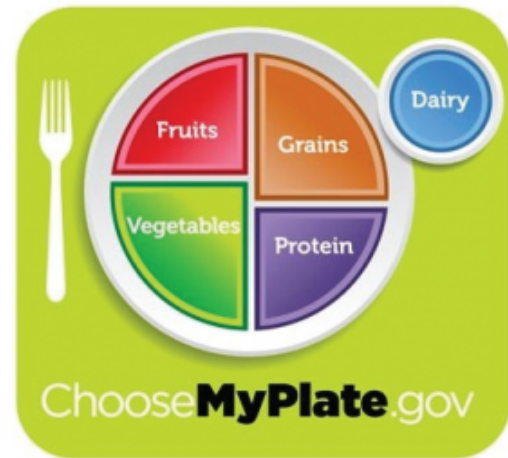
Cherries & Workout Recovery: The red color of dark-sweet cherry varieties means the fruit contains anthocyanins, a flavonoid that has been studied recently for aiding the body in recovery after a grueling workout. A recent study at Northumbria University found that athletes who consumed cherries before and after running a marathon recovered quicker than a placebo group.

Cherries & Heart Health: Those same anthocyanins that are good for reducing inflammation are also good for the heart! Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death in America. Just like red wine, the deep red color of cherries comes from anthocyanins, which work to protect the cells from damage during oxidation. They also serve to protect the heart and surrounding tissue, and inhibit plaque formation.

Cherries & Melatonin: Cherries are one of the few natural sources of melatonin, a hormone produced by the pineal gland that plays a key role in regulating the body's internal clock. Eating a handful of cherries when traveling is a great way to try and prevent jet lag. Additionally, melatonin is an important antioxidant that helps maintain brain functioning and may deter the onset of age-related diseases like Alzheimer's.



New dietary recommendations say to fill half your plate with fruits & veggies



After nearly two decades of use, the food pyramid has been replaced by a plate as the symbol for what Americans should strive to model their diet after. The new symbol reinforces the Food and Drug Administration's 2010 dietary recommendations, which encourage people to fill half of every plate they eat with fruits and vegetables.

My Plate was introduced in June by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and First Lady Michelle Obama. The easy-to-understand plate symbol breaks current dietary recommendations into five categories: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. Half of the plate is dedicated to fruits and vegetables, while the other half is mixed between whole grains and proteins. A cup of fat-free or low-fat dairy rounds out the plate.

The plate icon also encourages people to balance calories throughout the day, choose foods that are lower in sodium whenever possible, and drink water instead of sugary drinks.

"My Plate does a great job of highlighting the importance of eating fruits and vegetables at every meal," said Stemilt marketing director Roger Pepperl. "It's easy to understand and will be a great education tool to develop healthy eating habits in kids and adults alike."

Along with the My Plate unveiling, the U.S. Department of Agriculture launched a new website www.ChooseMyPlate.gov in order to provide people with resources on everything nutrition, including what counts as a fruit or vegetable serving. It also offers a free personalized food plan based on your age, gender, weight, height, and physical activity level.

To help with the fruit and vegetable half of the plate, Stemilt has a number of tips available on their website. Visit www.stemilt.com and click on the Healthy Living tab to start using those tips today!

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture. www.choosemyplate.gov

Nutrition Roundup from Stemilt Growers

Stemilt's Apple & Cherry Chutney

This delicious fresh fruit chutney makes for an elegant appetizer when served on baguette toasts with walnut-crusted brie.

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 ½ tablespoons minced shallot
1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon fresh orange zest
1 fuji apple, finely diced
1 cup halved fresh cherries
2 tablespoons minced dried apricots
3 tablespoons golden raisins
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
Pinch of white pepper
1 5-ounce wedge brie (skin on)
1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped
1 egg
1 teaspoon 2% milk (or heavy cream)
Sliced baguette toasts

PROCEDURE

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place brie wedge in freezer for 15 minutes.

Melt butter in large saucepan. Add shallots; cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Add brown sugar, lemon juice, and orange zest. Continue cooking until sugar is completely dissolved, about 2 minutes. Add apples, cherries, dried apricots, raisins, allspice, apple cider vinegar, and white pepper. Bring mixture to a low boil and simmer, stirring intermittently, until liquid has reduced by about half and sauce has thickened, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and set aside.

Place chopped nuts in a shallow dish. Crack egg into a separate shallow dish. Add milk and whisk until well combined. Remove brie from freezer and dip in egg wash, coating cheese on all surfaces. Transfer to walnut mix and turn to coat with nuts, gently pressing to ensure coverage. Place cheese on baking sheet. Bake for approximately 15 minutes. Transfer to serving tray.

Toast baguette slices and arrange on tray with cheese. Transfer apple-cherry chutney to a serving bowl and place with cheese and toasts. Serve immediately.



How To Freeze Sweet Cherries

Cherries don't have to be just a summertime treat! Here are two easy methods for freezing cherries:

Freezing Method #1 – Whole cherries with stems

First, rinse your fresh cherries under cold water and drain thoroughly. Spread cherries, with stems intact, in a single layer on a baking sheet. Then, freeze cherries until firm. Pack frozen cherries into a plastic freezer bag or like container. Remove excess air, seal, and freeze.

Freezing Method #2 – Dry Sugar Pack

Rinse fresh cherries under cold water and drain thoroughly. Add 1/3 cup of granulated sugar for each 2 cups of unpitted sweet cherries. Toss lightly to coat the cherries. Spread cherries, with stems intact, in a single layer on a baking sheet. Freeze cherries until firm. Fill plastic freezer bags or like container with cherries. Shake the bag periodically to pack the fruit down. Repeat until bag is almost full. Remove excess air, seal, and place in freezer.

Note: Sweet cherries can keep for 9-12 months in the freezer.

Healthy Living Tips from Olympic Athletes



Heather Petri

As the Official Fresh Fruit Sponsor of the U.S. National Water Polo teams, Stemilt is excited to bring you exclusive healthy living tips from water polo athletes. In this issue of *Nutrition Roundup*, we're sharing Women's National Team member and Three-time Olympian, Heather Petri's tips for keeping your mind and body in tip-top shape.

1. Wherever you go, make sure you bring a whole apple or pear along with you. Both fruits are available throughout the year, contain good-for-you fiber, and make for a filling snack.
2. Sliced apples and peanut butter make one tasty snack that's filled with protein and fiber!
3. Always eat within 30 minutes of working out. Even a small snack can go a long way to help refuel your body.
4. Believe it or not, chocolate milk is a great recovery drink after a long workout. It has the carbohydrates and protein that your body is craving.
5. The skin is in! Most of the nutrients in fruits like apples, pears, peaches, and nectarines are found within the fruit's skin (or peel). To get all of these nutrients, be sure to eat the whole fruit - skin and all!

To read more tips from other Olympic athletes, visit the Healthy Living section of our website - www.stemilt.com. Stay tuned for more tips from USA Water Polo in the next issue of *Nutrition Roundup*.



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