



BERRIES

Cafeteria Connection

Tell Me about Berries

Washington state is a major producer of many kinds of berries, including raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries. While most berries are ripe at the peak of summer season, they freeze well and can be enjoyed year-round.

Crediting Information

- Berries, whether fresh or frozen, contribute to the fruit meal pattern component by volume served. For example, 1/2 cup berries credit as 1/2 cup fruit.
- Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned (packed in water, fruit juice, or light syrup), and/or pasteurized, full-strength fruit juice, referred to as 100% juice, to credit as a fruit component. Dried fruits, including freeze-dried fruits, credit differently for each program, so please check with your specialist.



Raspberries, credit: WSDA



Nutrition Facts

Berries are a great source of vitamins, including vitamin C, which helps with healing, keeps skin and gums healthy, and supports immune function. They also contain fiber, which is important for a maintaining a healthy heart and digestive system and regulating blood sugar.

Selection and Storage

- Berries should be firm, plump, and dry. Strawberries don't ripen after harvest, so choose ones that are shiny and firm with bright red color. Choose blueberries that are firm, plump, and dusty blue in color. Blackberries should be shiny but not leaking. Raspberries come in a variety of colors, like red, yellow, black, purple and pink.
- Strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries last longer if stored at higher humidity with lower air circulation. Store in the coldest area of the refrigerator in a sealed container. Keep blackberries uncovered.
- Most berries only last a few days under refrigeration. Serve them within three days for best quality and nutrition.
- Frozen berries are ready to serve straight from the bag. They're flash-frozen at peak ripeness to lock in flavor and nutrition without spoilage or waste.
- Frozen berries are great for sauces, smoothies, and baked goods, while fresh berries are ideal for eating on their own or on top of yogurt.
- To protect your baked goods from discoloring, avoid thawing frozen berries before mixing them into batter or dough.



Blueberries, credit: WSDA

Culinary Tips

- Rinse fresh berries in cold water just before serving. For younger children, cut up or mash berries to prevent choking. For older kids, try adding berries to low-fat yogurt, whole-grain cereals, salads, or smoothies. berries. Thaw berries before adding to yogurt, parfaits, cereals, or salads.
- For all other preparations, don't thaw frozen berries. Stir frozen berries into hot cereals or baked goods, such as brownies, muffins, or pancakes.
- Fresh or frozen berries can be made into berry sauces or salad dressings.

Recipes

- [Berry Cornmeal Muffins Washington Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Seasonal Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits USDA Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Berry Medley and Quinoa Breakfast Bake USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Cottage Cheese and Fruit Bowls USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Strawberry Smoothie Bowl USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)

Sourcing

- [Find Berries](#)