

Cranberries.... a Thanksgiving Tradition; or is it?

By John Rizzo

Although cranberries have been around long before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock; it is unlikely that they were present at the first Thanksgiving. Cranberries are extremely tart berries that require plenty of sugar to make them palatable; at that time, sugar had not yet made it to the new world. But the Native Americans found many other uses for cranberries, then called "Ibimi" for bitter berry. They were used by medicine men to draw poison from arrow wounds, the juice was used to dye clothing, blankets and rugs; it was also used as a preservative when mashed and mixed with venison to form cakes called "pemmican".

Cranberries is another food that is rich in anti-oxidants and flavonoids (compounds that may help prevent cardiovascular disease and certain cancers)

In addition, a variety of studies have shown that cranberries contain compounds that inhibit bacteria growth on the bladder wall which may lead to infection.

Additional research, published in the Journal of the American Dental Association, revealed that isolated compounds from cranberries inhibited the growth of bacteria responsible for periodontal disease by as much as 58%.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published a study that showed that cranberry extracts reduced the growth of bacteria such as Staphylococcus, Salmonella, and E. coli.

Now that we've made cranberries part of our tradition; here is a unique, yet simple recipe that will add a new dimension to your Thanksgiving menu.

Cranberry Relish

Yield: 12 (1/2) cup servings

Oranges, Whole	3	Apples, Whole	3
Cranberries, Fresh	2 lbs.	Sugar, Granulated	1.5 lbs.

Wash all the Fruit and Cranberries well. Cut Oranges in quarters (skin on) and remove seeds. Cut apples in quarters and remove core and seeds. In a food processor, combine apples and oranges, skin on both, and cranberries. Process until mixture is chopped fine, but not pureed. Add the sugar and mix well. Keep relish in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Cranberry Relish can be made one day ahead. Serve with your favorite roasted poultry dish.