

# Blackberries



Sweet, purplish– black blackberries are closely related to the raspberries they resemble, but are a different fruit than black raspberries. The largest of wild berries, blackberries are also commercially cultivated with 85% of the U.S. crop grown in Oregon. Also called brambles due to the prickly shrubs they grow on, blackberries are in season May through August.

## Purchasing

- Select plump, almost black-colored berries that are slightly soft and have no attached hulls. (Hulls indicate immature berries that taste tart.)
- If packaged in a carton, check to make sure there are no juice stains at the bottom of the carton, or moldy or crushed berries inside.
- Fresh blackberries are very perishable and should be used as soon as possible after purchasing for best results.
- Refrigerate unwashed blackberries in a single layer covered with a damp paper towel for 1 to 2 days. Discard any moldy berries before storing.
- For longer storage, freeze washed and dried blackberries by placing them in a single layer on a baking pan. Freeze until hard, then transfer to freezer bags. Store frozen blackberries for up to 10 months.



## Preparing

- Remove and discard any damaged berries. Gently rinse under cold water just before using. Spread them out on paper towels to dry.
- Use a food processor or blender to puree blackberries for sauces. Pour the puree through a sieve before using to strain out the seeds.

## Serving Ideas

- Sprinkle fresh blackberries over bowls of your favorite cereal or serving of cottage cheese.
- Toss fresh blackberries into fruit or chicken salads and top with your favorite salad dressing.
- Add blackberries to summer smoothies and shakes.
- Replace one-quarter of the fresh fruit in your favorite baked pie, crisp or cobbler with blackberries. Apples and blackberries are a classic English pie filling.
- Layer fresh blackberries with yogurt and granola, or add vanilla pudding for an irresistible breakfast or tasty dessert parfaits.
- Garnish Cheesecake with fresh blackberries and mint sprigs.
- Sprinkle a tablespoon of sugar over a pint of fresh blackberries and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Serve the syrupy berry sauce over scoops of vanilla ice cream.

# Recipes

## Berry Jam

- 9 cups crushed berries
- 6 cups sugar

Combine berries and sugar in a large saucepot. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly to gelling point. As a mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from heat. Skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot jam into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Adjust two-piece caps. Process 15 minutes in a boiling-water canner.

Note: If seedless jam is preferred, crushed berries may be heated until soft and pressed through a sieve or food mill; measure pulp and proceed as above.

## Blackberry Jelly

- 4 cups blackberry juice (about 3 quarts)
- 7 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 pouches liquid pectin

To Make Jelly: Put blackberry juice in a large saucepot. Add sugar, stirring until dissolved. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Stir in liquid pectin. Return to a rolling boil. Boil hard 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot jelly into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Adjust two-piece caps. Process 10 minutes in a boiling-water canner.

## Berry Preserves

- 2 pounds berries
- 4 cups sugar

Combine berries and sugar; let stand until juice begin to flow, about 10 minutes. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly almost to gelling point. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from heat. Skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot preserves into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Adjust two-piece caps. Process in 15 minutes in a boiling-water canner.

## Freezing

Select fully-ripe, firm berries. Wash berries in cold water. Drain and dry berries. Discard soft, under-ripe or defective berries. Remove stems. Pack using one of the following methods:

**Sugar Pack:** Mix 1 part sugar with 4 parts berries until fruit is coated with the sugar. Pack into plastic freezer bags. Seal, label and freeze.

**Puree:** Select fully ripe berries. Puree using a food processor or food mill. Ladle berry puree into can-or-freeze jars or plastic freezer boxes, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

## Nutrition

Good source of fiber and excellent source of vitamin C.



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