



By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Last summer's vacation treated me to a delightful surprise: Beaver Island has cranberry bogs. I cannot divulge the exact locations, but their existence is [no secret](#). Cranberries grow on trailing vines of hardy evergreen bushes. The unique growing conditions—acidic, well-drained soil that is constantly moist—can be found throughout North America. Bogs are wetlands with a spongy mat of moss over the top. I found that it's possible to walk on a bog without getting my feet wet.

TV ads would have you believe otherwise. But, really, hip-boots are required only when wet-harvesting cultivated cranberries in the fall. The night before harvest, the bogs are flooded, the bushes are gently vibrated to release the ripe berries, and the cranberries are gathered from the surface. They float thanks to tiny air chambers inside each berry.

Another surprise—more cranberries are grown in the Midwest than anywhere else in the world. Wisconsin leads with 60% of US production. Michigan contributes with a vibrant albeit small cranberry industry.

Fresh cranberries—ranging in color from light red to very dark, almost black—packaged in one pound bags, appear in stores from October through December. The best cranberries are plump, glossy, and firm to the touch. At home, sort out and discard any berries that are soft, shriveled, or brown-spotted. Fresh cranberries store very well in an airtight container in the refrigerator. If you haven't used them within 3 weeks, move them to the freezer for up to a year.

When made into a relish, sauce, or glaze, cranberries are the perfect accompaniment to meat, poultry, and wild game. Their natural tartness is refreshing when balanced with sugar as in desserts like upside-down cake, muffins, ice cream, and sherbet. Dried cranberries, available year-round, are delicious on salads and any other way you would use raisins.

RECIPE for health

NOVEMBER 2014

featured food:

CRANBERRIES

Cranberry Glaze

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services.

- 2 Tablespoons canola oil
- ¾ cup sliced red onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup mirin
- ¼ cup rice wine vinegar
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 cup cranberry juice
- Zest and juice from ½ orange
- 2 Tablespoons butter, cut in small pieces

In a saucepan, over medium heat, warm the oil. Add onions to the pan and sauté for about 4 minutes. Add ginger and garlic and sauté for another minute.

Add cranberries, honey, mirin, and vinegar. Simmer for about 10 minutes until the cranberries start to pop.

Add soy sauce, cranberry juice, and orange zest and juice; continue to simmer until reduced by 30% to make a nice glaze. Test the reduction by dipping the back of a spoon into the glaze. Shake the spoon a little; if the glaze coats the spoon and sticks, the glaze is properly reduced.

Taste sauce for flavor and adjust if needed. Transfer sauce to a blender and blend until almost smooth. Return to saucepan over medium heat. When warm, remove from heat and stir in butter.

Try **Cranberry Glaze** with lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on November 13.

- Join us in person at Brody Square Demo Kitchen. Sign-up at health4u@msu.edu.
- Watch online: alumni.msu.edu/livestream.