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Home

Nutrition blog

Fruits

Vegetables

Nuts and seeds

Herbs

Spices

Cooking oils

Coconut water

Food nutrition

Okinawa diet

Nutrition articles

Nutrition search

BMI calculator

Blueberries nutrition facts

Sweet, juicy blueberries are rich in natural **pro-anthocyanin** pigment anti-oxidants. These tiny, round blue-purple berries have long been attributed to the longevity and wellness of indigenous natives living around subarctic regions in the Northern hemisphere.

Botanically, it is a deciduous shrub belonging within the family of *Ericaceae*, in the genus, *Vaccinium*.



Highbush blue-berry shrub-
Vaccinium corymbosum.
Note bloomy, deep blue color berries amidst rich foliage.



Blueberry-close up view.
Photo courtesy- msu.edu.

Broadly, *vaccinium* species are classified according to their growth habit as high-bush and low-bush berries.

- High-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) is a highly branched, erect deciduous shrub with rich foliage. It grows upto 10-12 feet tall in cultivated orchards and bears clusters of small, cream-white flowers during spring, which subsequently develop into tiny berries after about two months. In the wild, high bush-blueberry is found on the edges of marshes, lakes, ponds, and streams. *Rabbiteye* blueberry (*Vaccinium virgatum*, also known as *V. ashei*.) is a medium-sized shrub grows naturally in South Eastern parts of USA.
- Low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) is a short, erect plant that grows about one-two feet in height and spread through underground rhizomes. Under the cultivated farms, it is grown as two-year cycle crop, since the whole plant is either mowed down or burnt to allow new shoots that appear only during the next season.

Both species require well-drained sandy, acidic soil to flourish. This berry shrub prefers open sunny conditions and intolerant of shade. In general, the berries can be ready to harvest when they turn completely blue from green-pink, soft, juicy, and sweeter. Traditionally, they gathered by handpicking, and therefore, require intense laboring. Soon after the berries separated from the shrub, they are sorted out and transport to cold facility for storage.

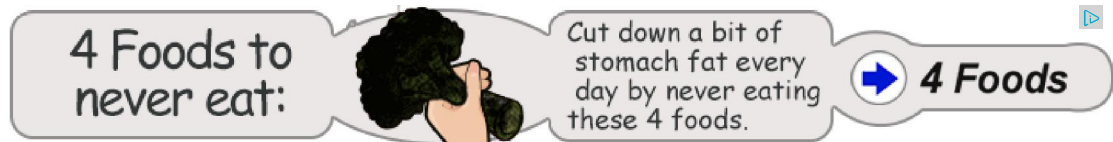
Health benefits of blueberries

- Blueberries are very low in calories. 100 g fresh berries carry just 57 calories. Nonetheless, they possess notable health benefiting plant-nutrients such as soluble dietary fiber, minerals, vitamins, and pigment anti-oxidants that contribute immensely towards optimum health and wellness.
- Blueberries are among the highest anti-oxidant value fruits. The **ORAC value of 100 g fresh blueberry is 5562 TE** (Trolox equivalents). Their antioxidant value largely derived from **poly-phenolic anthocyanidin** compounds such as *chlorogenic acid*, *tannins*, *myricetin*, *quercetin* and *kaempferol*.
- In addition, these berries compose of other flavonoid anti-oxidants such as *carotene-β*, *lutein* and *zeaxanthin*.
- Altogether, the phyto-chemical compounds in the blueberry help rid off harmful oxygen-derived free radicals from the human body, and thereby, protect it against cancers, aging, degenerative diseases, and infections.
- Further, research studies suggest that **chlorogenic acid** in these berries help lower blood sugar levels and control blood-glucose levels in type-II diabetes mellitus condition.

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- Fresh berries carry small amount of vitamin C, vitamin A and vitamin E. Altogether, these vitamins work as potent anti-oxidants which help limit free radical mediated injury to the body.
- The berries also carry a small amount of B-complex group of vitamins such as niacin, pyridoxine, folates and pantothenic acid. They are very good in vitamin B-6, niacin, riboflavin, pantothenic acid and folic acid. These vitamins are acting as co-factors that help in metabolism of carbohydrates, protein, and fats.
- Furthermore, they contain a good amount of minerals like potassium, **manganese**, copper, iron and zinc. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, *superoxide dismutase*. Copper is required for the production of red blood cells. Iron is required for red blood cell formation.



Selection and storage

In the United States, blueberries can be readily available in the markets year. However, fresh wild berries are at their best from June until August, when the harvest season begins in Michigan and Maine in USA and Quebec province in Canada.

In the stores, look for fresh berries that are firm, plump, smooth-skinned, with a silver-gray surface bloom. Buy deep purple-blue to blue-black berries. Avoid soft or shriveled, over-handled, bruised berries and those with signs of mold and of old stock.

Once at home, place the berries in a plastic or zip pouch and store inside the refrigerator set at high relative humidity. Stored thus, they stay well for up to a week.

Preparation and serving tips

Blueberries are sweet and juicy, and stain teeth and tongue deep blue. Trim away any stems and leaves if you have purchased berries directly from the local farmer.

They are better eaten fresh after washing in cold water. If taken out from the cold storage, place them in a bowl of water to bring them back to normal room temperature, which enriches their taste and palatability. Gently pat dry using a moisture absorbent cloth/paper and enjoy!

Here are some serving tips:

- Traditionally, blueberries have been part of food culture of Native Americans.
- While fresh berries eaten as they are like in [table grapes](#), dried ones added to soup, stews, and to sweeten venison meat.
- Dry blueberries are one of the most preferred berries in the preparation of muffins, pies, and cheesecakes.
- They are also favorite addition in fruit salads, fresh fruit-tarts, ice-creams, etc.
- They can also be employed to make juice, sauce, jellies, and jams.

Safety profile

Blueberries may rarely cause serious allergic reactions in some sensitized individuals. Often, these kinds of reactions occur because of possible cross-reactions to other fruits ([strawberry](#)), pollen or weed allergies. Some of the most common symptoms of blueberry allergy may include swelling and redness of mouth, lips and tongue, eczema, hives, skin rash, headache, runny nose, itchy eyes, wheezing and gastrointestinal disturbances. Individuals who suspect allergy to these fruits may want to avoid eating them. ([Medical disclaimer](#)).

See the table below for in depth analysis of nutrients:

Blueberries (*Vaccinium spp*)
ORAC Value 5562,
Nutrition Value per 100 g.
(Source: USDA National Nutrient data base)

Principle	Nutrient Value	Percentage of RDA
Energy	57 Kcal	3%
Carbohydrates	14.49 g	11%
Protein	0.74 g	1%
Total Fat	0.33 g	1%
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Dietary Fiber	2.4 g	6%
Vitamins		
Folates	6 µg	1.5%
Niacin	0.418 mg	2.5%
Pantothenic acid	0.124 mg	2.5%
Pyridoxine	0.052 mg	4%
Riboflavin	0.041 mg	3%
Vitamin A	54 IU	2%
Vitamin C	9.7 mg	1.5%
Vitamin E	0.57 mg	4%
Vitamin K	19.3 µg	13%
Electrolytes		
Sodium	1 mg	0%
Potassium	77 mg	2%
Minerals		
Calcium	6 mg	0.5%
Iron	0.28 mg	3.5%
Magnesium	6 mg	1.5%
Manganese	0.336 mg	14%
Zinc	0.16 mg	1.5%
Phyto-nutrients		
Carotene-β	32 µg	--
Lutein-zeaxanthin	80 µg	--