

## JULY IS CHERRY MONTH!

In addition to being sweet and juicy (or tart and mouthwatering, depending on the variety), cherries have a lot of health benefits as well. They are rich in heart-healthy anthocyanins and potassium, plus sleep promoting melatonin.

Cherries are high in polyphenols and Vitamin C, which have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. Vitamin C in particular, is important for skin, bones and connective tissue, promotes healing, helps the body to absorb iron and helps in the formation of neurotransmitters, or the body's chemical messengers.

Cherries have a low glycemic load so they don't spike blood sugar and insulin levels, which may help prevent type 2 diabetes, a condition that is on the rise among kids.

Cherries require a very particular climate to thrive, and the dry, temperate regions of the Okanagan happen to create perfect growing conditions for cherries - in fact 95% of the cherries grown in Canada are produced right here in BC. In the Okanagan Valley we are also fortunate to have a number of You-Pick farms where you can pick your own cherries.



Did you know the average cherry tree produces about 7,000 cherries? A single tree can yield enough cherries to make 28 pies!

### Dip it!

Dip cherries in melted chocolate. Refrigerate until firm.

### Blend it!

Add cherries instead of blueberries or strawberries to your favourite smoothie recipe.

### Top it!

Make a cherry sauce with fresh cherries,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar, 1 tbsp cornstarch and cook until thickened.

### Pop it!

Pop a freshly rinsed cherry (minus the stem) into your mouth, spit the pit and enjoy!

# CHERRY FRUIT LEATHER

## Ingredients

- 6 cups pitted cherries
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

## Directions

- Preheat oven to 170 degrees.
- Place cherries and water in a pot and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
- Simmer for 10 minutes, add sugar and lemon juice and simmer for 10 more minutes until the cherries have broken down.
- Blend cherry mixture until smooth.
- Evenly spread mixture onto three cookie sheets covered in parchment paper. Cook in oven for 3-4 hours.
- Using a knife or pizza cutter, slice into narrow strips and roll up!

# CHERRY BBQ SAUCE

## Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups fresh sweet cherries, pitted & coarsely chopped
- 1 cup ketchup
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp ground mustard
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp pepper

## Directions

- In a large saucepan, sauté onion in butter until tender.
- Add garlic, cook 1 minute longer.
- Stir in the remaining ingredients.
- Cook uncovered on medium-low heat for 20 minutes or until cherries are tender and sauce is thickened, stirring occasionally.