

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.

