

# PRINCETON

HOLIDAY 2012

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## TO THE CRANBERRY

Both sour and sweet, you sauce the meat, your flavor does not vary. Retiring, coy, yet full of joy—O marvelous cranberry!

# O MARVELOUS CRANBERRY!

★ NEW JERSEY'S SUPERFRUIT ★

BY LINDA ARNTZENIUS

RECIPES AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
OCEAN SPRAY CRANBERRIES, INC.



**T**hey're tart. They're tangy. And most people couldn't imagine a Thanksgiving meal without them. But love them or leave them, there's no denying the cranberry is downright good for you. Julia Child called it the "crimson condiment" and served it as a chutney "tart and sweet, with a touch of heat," with all kinds of cold meats, but especially with turkey. Child cooked the fresh berries with apple, lemon zest, orange juice and a touch of cayenne pepper; variations of her recipe are made in kitchens across the country every November.

Today, the cranberry is called a "superfruit" because of high levels of nutrients and antioxidants thought to benefit the immune system. Take a sewing needle and some dental floss and string a bunch of fresh berries together with popped corn and cinnamon sticks, *et voila*: a festive garland and fun project to do with kids. Adults may prefer their cranberries juiced as in the cocktail Carrie Bradshaw and her *Sex and the City* pals made fashionable in the 1990s. South Beach, Florida bartender Cheryl Cook is credited with inventing "The Cosmopolitan," by adding equal parts Triple Sec, Roses Lime, and cranberry juice to Absolut Citron. Research has shown that cranberries contain high concentrations of flavonoids, which, much like red wine, are touted as promoting good circulation and a healthy heart. According to leading cranberry producer

Ocean Spray, it takes 4,400 cranberries to make one gallon of cranberry juice.

Ocean Spray reports that three quarters of Americans serve store-bought cranberry sauce at Thanksgiving—over 5,062,500 gallons of jellied cranberry sauce, roughly equivalent to a can for every family in the nation—rather than homemade sauce. Surprising when you think how easy it is to make your own and how much fun it is to watch the berries pop in the pot and smell the aroma of added sweeteners and spices.

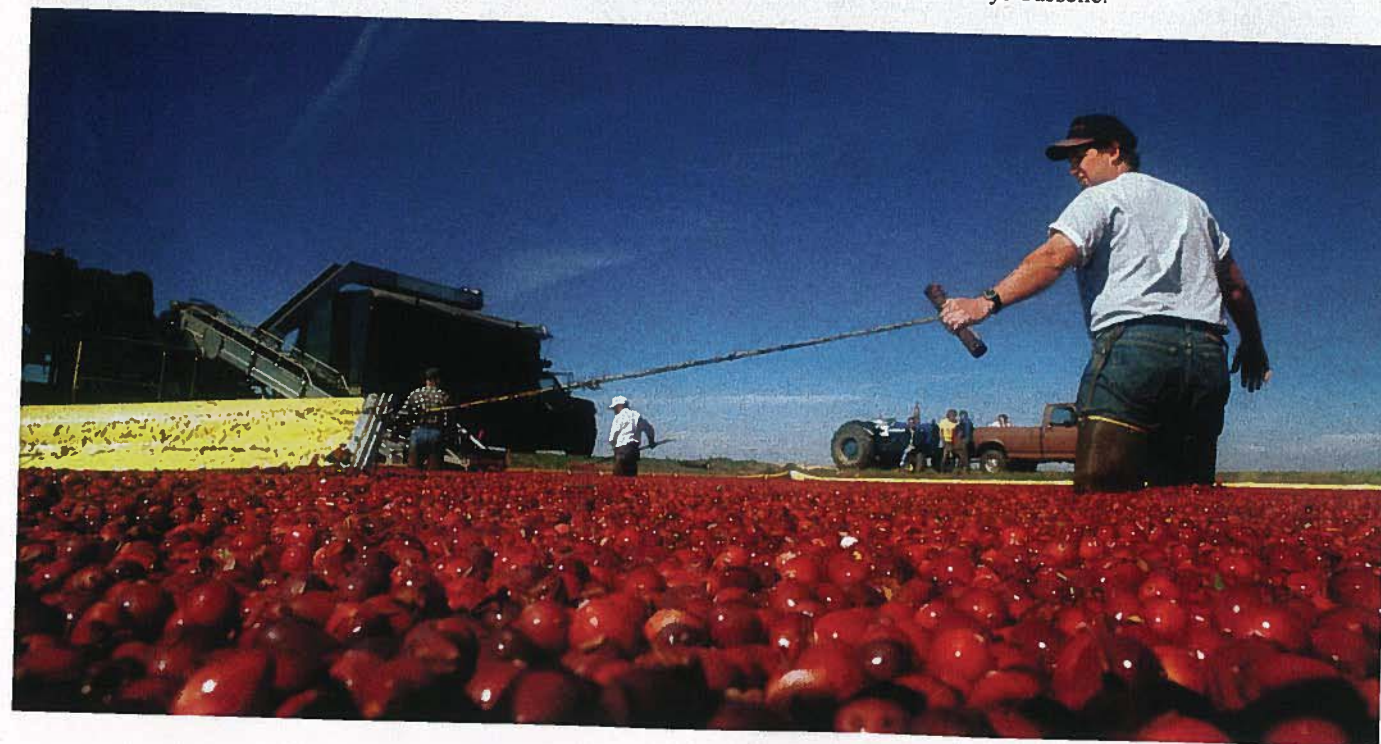
As Thanksgiving Day approaches, bags of fresh berries start to appear on local supermarket shelves. For the rest of the year, they are found processed as juice, sauce, jam, or sweetened and dried. Four hundred million pounds of cranberries are consumed by Americans each year, twenty percent of that during Thanksgiving week.

## GENERATIONS OF NJ GROWERS

Chances are that some of those berries come from the Pinelands farm that Bill Haines, Jr. and his family have run for four generations. Haines is the owner and CEO of Pine Island Cranberry Company and his roots connect to 120 years of family history in the region. For a time, Haines served on the Board of Directors at Ocean Spray and he's a former mayor of Washington Township. As a member of the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Haines helped expand the county's Farmland and Open Space Preservation programs and created

a Parks Department, preserving over a thousand acres and developing six parks in the county.

Cristina Tassone has been taking care of Haines's cranberry bogs for almost six years. As Pine Island's Integrated Crop Manager, Tassone carefully oversees the well-being of all the bogs, assessing nutrition levels, managing the water, and controlling any pests, diseases, and weeds that might be harmful to the precious crop. This year, a Labor Day rainstorm damaged the sensitive bogs and dams. Nonetheless, Tassone reports that the harvest went well even if it took several weeks of working seven days a week to ensure that the dams and bogs were in good enough shape to get started. During the short harvesting period, which generally runs between mid to late September and the end of October, everyone on the farm pulled together. "Even with all of the damage, we were able to get the bogs ready in time and able to break a record for number of barrels harvested," says Tassone, for whom cranberry growing is a lifestyle choice. "We do whatever the cranberries need. We are there no matter what—holidays, during day, at night." Tassone never tires of eating cranberries, anyway they come. During the harvest season she eats them raw with honey and if she's not drinking cranberry juice, she's munching on Craisins Trail Mix or eating the dried cranberries that Ocean Spray calls "craisins" in a salad. "I enjoy working with a crop that's so unique," says Tassone.





## CRANBERRY GORGONZOLA APPETIZER TART

**1 refrigerated pie crust (from 15-ounce package), room temperature**  
**8 ounce package cream cheese, softened**  
**½ cup crumbled gorgonzola cheese, room temperature**  
**2 tablespoons milk**  
**1 large egg, lightly beaten**  
**1 cup Ocean Spray® Fresh or Frozen Cranberries, chopped**  
**2 tablespoons chopped green onions**  
**2 tablespoons chopped pecans**

- Heat oven to 450°F.
- Prepare pie crust as directed on package for one-crust baked shell using a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom.
- Trim excess pie crust even with top of pan.
- Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until light brown.
- Cool 10 minutes.
- Reduce oven temperature to 375°F.
- Combine cream cheese and gorgonzola cheese in a medium mixing bowl; beat with electric mixer on medium speed until blended.
- Beat in milk and egg until well mixed.
- Gently stir in cranberries and green onions.
- Spread mixture in baked tart shell; sprinkle with pecans.
- Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until filling is set.
- Let stand 30 minutes before serving.
- Cut into wedges.
- If desired, garnish with additional green onions.
- Store covered in refrigerator.

Makes 12 servings

## FROM CRANE BERRY TO CRANBERRY

The cranberry grows on small evergreen shrubs or trailing vines in acidic bogs in cool climes from Maine to Wisconsin and down the Appalachian Mountains to North Carolina. If you've ever visited the Pine Barrens in Southern New Jersey, you'll have seen them growing wild. If you've *never* visited the Pine Barrens, put it on your To Do list, the region is a New Jersey treasure. The American cranberry, along with the Concord Grape and the blueberry, are the only native North American fruits commercially cultivated in the United States. Its cousin, the European cranberry, is much smaller in size.

The flowers are dark pink, with petals that turn back on themselves. The berry, on slim wiry stems low to the ground, starts out white and ripens to a deep red. The berries are bigger than the plant's leaves and, while they can be eaten raw, taste very tart and need to be sweetened.

It's thought likely that the plant's original name "craneberry" was given by the first Dutch and German settlers who noticed that the pale flowers of the

spring-blooming plant resemble the head and bill of a crane. Or it may be because the berries provided food for cranes along the New England and New Jersey coasts. Either way, the name evolved into cranberry and has been used for many towns in the region. Princeton's neighbor, the Middlesex County town Cranbury, shows up on 18th century maps as Cranberry. It's not known whether cranberries were picked on marshy land near there but in 1869, the town and its brook were renamed Cranbury to represent the Old English usage of "bury" for "burgh" or "township."

The Lenni Lenape called the wild fruit "pakim," or bitter berry, and used cranberries in a variety of ways. As a food, they were cooked with maple syrup to make a sweet sauce. Ground into a pulp, they were mixed with dried deer meat or fish and shaped into cakes dried in the sun to become a first fast food: pemmican stayed fresh for a long time and was eaten during the winter months.

Native Americans used cranberries as a medicine to treat blood poisoning and as a poultice for wounds. They used the juice to dye rugs and blankets. Such was

their importance that they were often presented to settlers as a symbol of peace. It is thought likely that wild cranberries were served at the first Thanksgiving meal. European sea captains would trade for cranberries as a way of preventing scurvy. In 1680, a resident of West Jersey praised the fruit in a letter home to England: "an excellent sauce is made of them for venison, turkey and other great fowl, and they are better to make tarts than either gooseberries or cherries. We have them brought to our houses by Indians in great plenty."

## PINELANDS LORE

After the success of the first commercial cranberry crop in Massachusetts in 1816, the business took off in New Jersey where growers began clearing marshes and fresh-water swamps and building dikes and ditches to create cranberry bogs in and around the Pinelands.

Until the middle of the last century, cranberries were grown in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Monmouth and Ocean counties. Today, the majority of the state's cranberry bogs are located in the western region of

Cristina Tassone and NJ growers at this year's harvest in South Jersey (courtesy of Ocean Spray).





Fourth-generation cranberry grower Cristina Tassone stands with her parents Anthony Tassone, Jr. and Maryland Tassone.

Burlington County, with a few in Atlantic and Ocean counties. Cranberry growers, many of them family-run business for generations, follow much of the same practices and principles as their forebears. Aside from new technology that allows for greater productivity, the process has altered little since the mid-nineteenth century.

The history of cranberries in the Garden State is as rich and colorful as the "superfruit" itself. New Jerseyans have been eating wild cranberries since the earliest settlements. In 1789, the New Jersey state legislature passed a statute forbidding anyone to pick the berries before October 10, then the official date for the start of the season. If you were caught red-handed, so to speak, before that date, you were fined a whopping 10 shillings.

Pinelands lore includes characters like John "Old Peg Leg" Webb and placenames like Ongs Hat, Double Trouble, Mount Misery, Friendship, Penny Pot, and Hog Wallow. As the story goes, back in 1845, Webb accidentally discovered "the cranberry bounce" and a way to sort cranberries that ultimately led to a new harvesting technique. Unable to carry the berries downstairs because of his disability, Webb let the berries roll down the stairs instead. The good, firm berries

bounced while the soft, bad berries stayed on the stairs, a distinction that was later used by D.T. Staniford of New Brunswick, to develop the first cranberry separator.

The title, "Cranberry King of New Jersey," however, is reserved for Andrew Jackson Rider (founder and first president of Rider College, now Rider University). Reportedly bestowed upon him by Queen Victoria, the title came from Rider's efforts to build the state's cranberry industry. In 1893, he took a crate of American cranberries with him when he sailed across the Atlantic on a British ocean liner. On board, he taught the ship's chef how to serve the berries as a sauce and gave out bouquets of them to passengers. On landing, he was unimpressed by the sauce usually prepared from cranberries in England, and set out to show the British his superior product, even compiling and distributing recipes. Ultimately, Rider was able to present his berries to the Prince of Wales and then to his mother, Queen Victoria. The Queen must have enjoyed them. The year after Rider's visit, 5,000 barrels of cranberries were imported into England. Rider, who owned 500 acres of cranberry bogs near Hammonton, New Jersey, earned his moniker.

Like no other fruit in the way it is harvested, cranberries are gathered after growers flood the bogs with water in the fall and the air inside of the berries causes them to float. Once, an army of pickers, often whole families from Philadelphia's Italian community, would come for the approximately six-week season to pick the berries by hand. Then a scoop was designed to facilitate the process: a wood box with steel teeth for stripping the berries from their vines. Because it was heavy, it was used mainly by men and the family aspect of the picking died out.

Today's harvesting is done by a method that was introduced in the 1960s: a water harvester that beat the berries off the vine instead of stripping them, thereby increasing yield while decreasing the amount of labor involved.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the cranberry business in New Jersey was drawing land speculators from Buffalo, Chicago, and New York City. Land that had previously been thought worthless was turned into cranberry bogs. The business boomed with the arrival of the Camden and Atlantic Railroad and the West Jersey Railroad. According to state records, in 1881, the Camden and Atlantic transported 25,016 bushels of cranberries to Philadelphia; the West Jersey transported 9,257. Military demand during World War II spurred the cranberry canning industry, but eventually cranberries gave way to blueberries in New Jersey.

By the 1950s, blueberries had displaced cranberries. The postwar housing boom further eroded the acreage devoted to the industry. But even though there are fewer cranberry bogs and growers today than in earlier times, cranberries remain a part of the New Jersey economy. Today Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and New Jersey are the top cranberry growing states, with about 10 percent of the nation's cranberries grown in the Garden State.

By the time this story is read, the bulk of the cranberry harvest in New Jersey will have taken place and the fruit will be in local stores like McCaffrey's and Wegmans. Take a leaf out of Julia Child's book and try your hand at fresh cranberry sauce this year! Or savor a recipe, courtesy of Ocean Spray. ■



### SIZZLING BACON-WRAPPED APRICOTS WITH CRANBERRY GLAZE

2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed with 2 teaspoons water  
 1/4 teaspoon whole-grain mustard  
 1 1/2 teaspoons packed brown sugar  
 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 12 slices maple-cured bacon, halved crosswise  
 24 dried apricots  
 1 1/2 cups Ocean Spray® 100% Juice Cranberry Juice Blend

- Boil cranberry juice in medium saucepan over high heat until reduced to 1 cup.
- Whisk in cornstarch, brown sugar, mustard and nutmeg.
- Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute until thickened.
- Cool to room temperature.
- Reserve cup of the glaze.
- Meanwhile, line rimmed baking sheet with foil; set wire rack over foil and spray with cooking spray.
- Wrap bacon halves around apricots and secure with wooden pick.
- Brush with glaze and place on wire rack.
- Broil 3 to 7 minutes, or until bacon is browned, turning once.
- Serve warm with reserved glaze.

Makes 24 appetizers



### CRANBERRY APPLE CHUTNEY

2/3 cup vinegar  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1 1/2 cups peeled, diced apple  
 1/3 cup diced onion  
 1/4 teaspoon each: cinnamon, ginger, allspice  
 Dash ground cloves  
 One 5-ounce package Ocean Spray® Craisins® Original Dried Cranberries

- Combine vinegar and sugar in a medium saucepan.
- Bring to a boil over medium heat.
- Add apple and onion; return to a boil.
- Add remaining ingredients.
- Reduce heat to low.
- Cook for 25 minutes or until apples are tender, stirring occasionally.
- Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 1 3/4 cups

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