This week we are featuring blueberries!
Did you know:
The blueberry muffin is the Minnesota state muffin.
Native Americans call them "starberries."
There are five major types of blueberries in the US.
Blueberries are self-pollinating.
Blueberries only have 84 calories per cup.
Blueberries are not really blue, but actually a deep purple.

Streusel Topped Blueberry French Toast Casserole

Prep: 10 min.
Cook: 40 min.
Total: 50 min.
Servings: 10

Streusel
1/3 C. white flour
1/3 C. white sugar
3 T. cold butter cubed

Casserole
5 lg. eggs
1-1/2 C. milk
1/3 C. maple syrup
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 tsp. vanilla extract
16 oz. stale bread cut into 1-inch cubes
2/3 C. cream cheese, cubed
2 C. blueberries

Serve
extra blueberries and maple syrup

Streusel: Combine the flour, sugar and cinnamon for the streusel in a medium bowl. rub in the butter with your fingertips until coarse crumbs form. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Casserole: Whisk the eggs, milk, maple syrup, cinnamon and vanilla together in a large measuring jug.

Place half of the bread in a 9×13 inch casserole dish. Top with the cream cheese and half of the blueberries. Pour over 1/3 of the egg mixture. Top with the remaining bread and berries, then pour over the remaining egg mixture. Make sure to pour it evenly over all of the bread so no pieces are left dry.

Cover the casserole with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight, or at least 2 hours.

Once ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350°F. Evenly top with the streusel, then bake the casserole for 40-50 min., or until set. Allow the bake to rest on the counter for 10 min. before serving.

Blueberry Barbecue Sauce

Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 30 min.
Total Time: 40 min.

1 C. fresh blueberries
1/2 C. ketchup
1/2 C. apple cider vinegar
1 T. maple syrup
1 clove fresh garlic crushed

Crush the garlic, rinse the blueberries or if you are using frozen, rinse them off and let them thaw out in a bowl.

Add fresh blueberries, ketchup, apple cider vinegar, and fresh garlic to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to low, and simmer 30-35 min. while stirring occasionally until the blueberries become very soft.

Stir in maple syrup, and check the taste for sweetness and adjust the flavors.

For a smooth sauce, place sauce into a blender, food processor or use an immersion blender.

Blueberry Salad

Prep time: 15 min.
Servings: 4-6

Almonds
2/3 C. sliced almonds
3 T. sugar

Salad
8 C. spring greens/baby spinach/greens
4 baby, seedless cucumbers (thinly sliced)
4 green onions (thinly sliced)
1 C. blueberries
1/4 C. finely grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Vinaigrette
1/4 C. balsamic vinegar
1 minced clove of garlic
2 T. heavy cream
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
2 tsp. honey
Pinch of salt and pepper
1/2 C. extra virgin olive oil
2 T. chopped chives

Caramelizing Almonds: Place sliced almonds in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add sugar and cook, stirring often, until the sugar melts and coats the almonds with a caramel-like texture. This process takes about 6 to 8 min. Keep a close eye on the skillet, as the almonds can burn quickly.

Once caramelized, transfer the almonds onto a piece of parchment paper to cool. If they have clumped together, gently break them into pieces.

Salad: In a large bowl, toss your chosen greens with a generous pinch of salt and pepper.

Sprinkle blueberries, sliced baby seedless cucumbers, and green onions over the greens. Add grated parmesan cheese. Top the salad with the cooled caramelized almonds.

Creamy Balsamic Vinaigrette: In a mixing bowl, whisk together balsamic vinegar, garlic, heavy cream, mustard, and honey. Add a pinch of salt and pepper.

Slowly stream in extra virgin olive oil while continuing to whisk until the dressing becomes emulsified. Stir in freshly chopped chives.

Serve the salad immediately, drizzling it with the creamy balsamic vinaigrette for added flavor.

Store any leftover dressing in the refrigerator. Shake or whisk it well before using again.

Salmon with Blueberry Compote

Prep Time: 15 min.
Cook Time: 10 min.
Salmon Time: 10 min.
Total Time: 35 min.

Blueberry Compote
2 T. unsalted butter
1 med. pear peeled, cored, finely chopped
1/4 C. finely chopped shallots
1/4 C. blueberries
3 T. white wine vinegar
1 tsp. sugar
1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 T. extra virgin olive oil

Salmon
4 salmon filets

Compote: Heat butter in medium pan. Add shallots, pear and blueberries until cooked through about one minute.

Add white vinegar, sweetener, cinnamon, dash salt. Bring to boil, reduce heat to low, continue to cook for about 6-8 min., and mash to make a compote consistency.

Salmon: Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Dry salmon with paper towels. Take out of fridge 30 min. in advance if you have the time. Season with salt and pepper.

Add a small amount of oil to a pre-heated frying pan. Add salmon steaks skin side down, and cook on medium for 4-5 min. Salmon should easily release to turn over.

Place pan in oven for another 3-4 min. Serve with compote.

Blueberry/Lemon Frozen Yogurt Bites

Active Time: 15 min.
Total Time: 2 hr. 20 min.
Servings: 2

1/3 C. freeze-dried blueberries
1 C. whole-milk plain strained (Greek-style) yogurt
2 T. vanilla extract
2 tsp. grated lemon zest
1/4 tsp. ground cardamom or cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt
2 C. fresh blueberries

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place freeze-dried blueberries in a zip-top plastic bag. Using a rolling pin, crush the berries into a very fine powder. Transfer the powder to a medium bowl; stir in yogurt, vanilla, lemon zest, cardamom (or cinnamon), and salt, until smooth. Add blueberries; stir to coat.

Using a fork, remove 1 blueberry from the yogurt, tapping excess yogurt off; use a wooden pick to push the blueberry off the fork onto the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining blueberries, leaving space between them. Place the baking sheet, uncovered, in the freezer until the bites are frozen, at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours. Remove from the freezer 5 min. before serving.

Lemon-Blueberry Bars

Active Time: 15 min.
Total Time: 2 hr. 40 min.
Servings: 9

1-1/4 C. graham cracker crumbs
4 T. salted butter, melted

1 T. granulated sugar
Zest of 1 lemon, divided
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1/2 C. lemon juice
1 lg. egg
1 C. fresh blueberries

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch-square baking pan with cooking spray.

Stir graham cracker crumbs, butter, sugar and half the lemon zest together in a medium bowl. Press the mixture firmly and evenly into the prepared pan. Bake until lightly browned around the edges, about 10 min. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for at least 10 min.

Meanwhile, thoroughly whisk condensed milk, lemon juice, egg and the remaining lemon zest together in a medium bowl. Stir in blueberries. Pour the filling evenly over the baked crust. Bake until set, 16 to 18 min. Let cool at room temperature for 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour more.

Blueberry Cookies

Prep Time: 15 min.
Total Time: 45 min.
Servings: 20

Cookies
2-1/2 C. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. cornstarch
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 C. granulated sugar
1/2 C. unsalted butter, softened
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 lg. egg
1 T. lemon juice
1 T. lemon zest
2 C. blueberries

Lemon glaze
1 C. powdered sugar
1 T. heavy cream
1 T. lemon juice
1 lemon, zested

Cookies: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl, combine flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt.

In a large bowl, beat sugar, butter, and cream cheese until creamy. Scrape down sides, then add egg, lemon juice and zest and beat until combined. Add dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Gently fold in blueberries.

Using a large cookie scoop, scoop dough (about 3 T.) onto prepared baking sheets, spacing 2 in. apart. Bake until cookies are set and edges turn lightly golden, 10 to 15 min. Let cool.

Glaze: Whisk together powdered sugar, cream, lemon juice and zest. Drizzle on top of cookies.

Quote of the Week:

"A sweet friendship refreshes the soul."

~ Proverbs 27:9