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IT'S TIME FOR BLUEBERRY DESSERTS!

This season, our markets are brimming with blueberries! You'll find them in supermarkets, super-stores, roadside stands and farmers markets, ripe and ready to enjoy. Blueberries are not only an American favorite, they're an important part of the American culinary tradition.

When the early settlers arrived in the New World, they brought with them old world recipes for fruit cobblers, bettys, puddings, pies, cakes and trifles. The colonists quickly realized they could make their favorite desserts using blueberries – one of only three fruits native to North America -- in place of other berries and fruit they used in Great Britain and other parts of Europe. Thus began the great American tradition for blueberry desserts. You can keep the tradition alive, whether you bake or “assemble” your summer desserts, with these updated versions of the old classics!

A classic trifle is made by layering fruit with cake and whipped cream, but we have a lighter version you can make in a snap. **Blueberry Trifle** (photo) can be served individually, which is perfect for buffet-style entertaining, or arrange it in a glass bowl for serving family-style.

Since the settlers first made cobblers, they've been an American summer favorite. Our **Blueberry Cobbler** (photo) uses an unusual method that gives you fluffy, golden biscuits on a sweet, bubbly blueberry filling.

Early Americans baked layers of spiced, sweetened fruit and buttered breadcrumbs and called the dessert a betty. This version of **Quick and Light Blueberry Betty** (photo) doesn't need baking! It starts with blueberries and a few other ingredients that cook in the microwave plus a crisp nutty topping you make in a skillet. Serve with a scoop of lemon sorbet or vanilla frozen yogurt.

Have you noticed that fresh blueberries have a silvery sheen? The perfectly natural coating protects the fruit and keeps moisture inside. When you get your fresh blueberries home, store them in their containers in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. Give them a quick rinse under cold water just before you use them. Blueberries never need to be chopped, stemmed or peeled, so they're ready to go into desserts, salads, beverages, pancakes and more—or to pop in your mouth whenever you like!

If you have more fresh blueberries than you can use right away, you can freeze your berry bounty. Wrap the containers in plastic wrap or place in zip-top bags and pop them into the freezer, then rinse the blueberries just before you use them. Or, rinse the berries, then spread on a towel to dry to prevent them from sticking together when they freeze. Return to their containers or pour into rigid plastic freezer containers or zip-top bags. For best quality, use frozen blueberries within six months.

The USDA recommends adults eat two cups of fruit a day—all year round. Fresh or frozen blueberries can help you fulfill that recommendation. A one-cup serving of blueberries has just 80 calories and is an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of dietary fiber and manganese, an essential mineral we need every day. They also contain antioxidants thought to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

For a bounty of blueberry recipes and other information, go to www.blueberrycouncil.org.

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BLUEBERRY TRIFLE



2 cups fresh blueberries, divided
4 tablespoons sugar, divided
1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 container (6 ounces) nonfat vanilla yogurt
4 ounces neufchatel cheese (reduced-fat cream cheese), at room temperature
2 tablespoons sweet sherry or orange juice
2-1/2 cups fat-reduced frozen pound cake cut in 1/2-inch cubes (half of 10 to 11 ounce package)

In small saucepan, stir together 1/2 cup of the blueberries, 2 tablespoons of the sugar, the cornstarch, and 3/4 cup water. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until sauce is clear and thickened and berries pop, about 5 minutes; cool. Add 1 cup of the blueberries. Meanwhile, in small bowl, combine yogurt, neufchatel cheese and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar until smooth; stir in sherry. To serve in individual 6- to 8-ounce glasses: Spoon about 1/4 cup of the cake cubes into the bottom of each glass; top with heaping tablespoon of the blueberry sauce and about 1-1/2 tablespoons of the yogurt mixture; repeat; garnish each glass using remaining 1/2 cup blueberries. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour. Alternatively, serve Blueberry Trifle in 1-quart glass bowl by arranging in layers, half of the cake cubes topped with half of the blueberry sauce and yogurt mixture; repeat. Garnish with remaining 1/2 cup blueberries. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours.

YIELD: 4 portions

Photo: #BC-52

Per portion: 281 calories; 39 g carbohydrate; 11 g total fat (7 g saturated fat); 2g fiber

BLUEBERRY COBBLER



3-1/2 cups fresh blueberries or 1 bag (1 lb.) frozen blueberries

1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 cup all-purpose flour

3/4 cup turbinado (raw) sugar or granulated sugar, divided

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup milk

3 tablespoons butter, melted

3/4 cup boiling water

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread blueberries in ungreased 8 or 9-inch square baking dish or pan. Sprinkle with cornstarch; drizzle with lemon juice; set aside. In medium bowl, combine flour, 1/2 cup of the sugar, the baking powder and salt. Add milk and butter; stir just until combined (not smooth.) Drop 9 mounds of dough onto blueberries. Pour boiling water over dough and fruit. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup sugar. Bake until biscuits are golden brown and blueberries are bubbly, 45 to 50 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

YIELD: 8 portions

Photo: #BC-50

Per portion: 209 calories; 39 g carbohydrate; 6 g total fat (3 g saturated fat); 2g fiber

QUICK AND LIGHT BLUEBERRY BETTY



- 1/3 cup blueberry preserves
- 3 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 5 slices white bread, torn into pieces
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup

In 8-inch square (2-quart) microwavable dish, stir blueberry preserves with 2 tablespoons water. Place in microwave; cook on high until preserves melt, about 30 seconds; stir in blueberries. Return to microwave; cook until blueberries are hot, but not bursting, 1 to 2 minutes. Meanwhile, in food processor place bread; whirl until coarsely crumbled; set aside. In large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter. Add breadcrumbs and almonds. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in maple syrup; cook and stir until mixture begins to thicken, about 1 minute. Remove from heat. Top blueberries with crumb mixture. Serve immediately or allow to cool; serve with lemon sorbet or sherbet, if desired.

YIELD: 6 portions

Photo: #BC-41

Per Portion: 230 calories, 40 g carbohydrate, 7 g total fat, 3 g saturated fat

