

THE WONDER OF BERRIES

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There has been an abundance of berries over the summer and they are continuing to pop up. Blackberries have been showing themselves more and more recently. They are such powerhouses of nutrients and are easily found in the wild, which makes them easy pickings! Berries aren't only good for jams, tarts and puddings, they are full of healing power so to adding them into your day would be a tasty and healthful thing to do.

What's in a berry?

So, what makes berries so special? Berries are full of a compound known as ellagic acid. Ellagic acid is believed to help prevent cellular change which can lead to pathologies such as cancer. Strawberries and blackberries having the highest content of this powerful antioxidant. A potent antioxidant such as this can reduce damage caused by free radicals (harmful oxygen molecules which can damage healthy cells and potentially start a cancerous process).

Berries are also high in vitamin C – one of the most powerful antioxidants which may help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and infections. Half a cup of strawberries has 42 milligrams, which

is 70% of our recommended dietary allowance! To get the most vitamin C from your fruits eat them fresh, as cooking can destroy much of the vitamin C levels.

Fresh and frozen

When shopping for berries I like to buy a mixture of fresh and frozen. Strawberries I always buy fresh and my blueberries and other berries I tend to buy frozen; I throw them in the blender and have a berry smoothie each day. When buying them fresh, make sure that the colour is bright and bold and there is no water or juice in the bottom of the box.

My frozen blueberry smoothie recipe

- **250gms frozen blueberries.** If you prefer it less cold, leave the berries out to defrost or use fresh.
- **½ pint coconut milk.** You can use a milk of your choice. If making the smoothie for someone who needs to boost calories then add coconut cream or oat cream fraiche for dairy free, or cream and full fat milk for dairy based.
- If you like a bit of extra sweetness add **half a banana.**

Simple but effective!