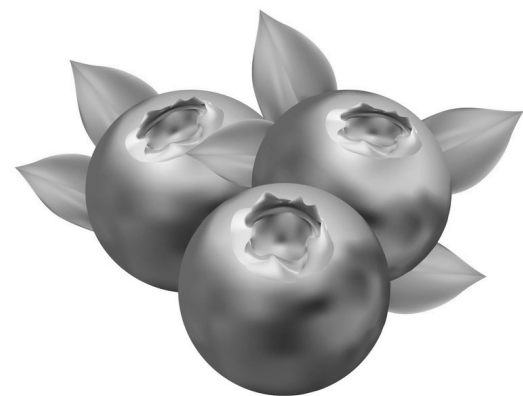


Go Blue!



By Laura Kurella

With New research published this year in the European Journal of Nutrition, reporting that daily consumption of the equivalent of one cup of fresh blueberries, given as 24 g of freeze dried powder, showed positive changes in cognitive function over a placebo, it has me thrilled to learn that blueberries have big powers packed into their little berries!

The research titled, “Dietary blueberry improves cognition among older adults in a randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled trial,” was conducted at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

Conducted over a 90-day period, 13 healthy men and 24 healthy women between the ages of 60 and 75 were randomly assigned to receive either freeze-dried Highbush blueberry powder daily (the equivalent to one cup of fresh blueberries) or a placebo powder.

The subjects were tested for balance, gait, and cognition at baseline and again at 45 and 90 days, respectively.

The results concluded that the blueberry-supplemented group showed significantly fewer repetition errors compared to those in the placebo group when given the California Verbal Learning Test (CLVT), which is a neuro psychological test used to assess verbal memory abilities.

The blueberry group also had fewer errors on trials when they switched to a new task as part of a task-switching test, when compared to the placebo group.

Task switching is an important component



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of executive function, a collection of brain processes that are responsible for guiding thought and behavior. There was no improvement in mobility, however, in either the blueberry or the placebo group being studied.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of Americans over the age of 65 is projected to grow rapidly, reaching 88.5 million by 2050, making it more important than ever to assess cognitive health in older adults and uncover interventions that may promote healthy aging, especially diet and exercise.

“While more evidence is needed, results of this study add to the body of research on blueberry-supplemented diets and positive outcomes in cell and animal research on age-related cognitive decline,” said Barbara Shukitt-Hale, Ph.D., a USDA Staff Scientist in the Laboratory of Neuroscience and Aging, USDA-ARS, Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) at Tufts University and one of the study’s lead investigators. “The addition of an easily attainable amount of blueberries to the diet may be an overall positive diet and lifestyle strategy for older adults.”

Here now are some beautiful summer

ideas to help you go BLUE this summer, too – ENJOY!

Blueberry, Prosciutto & Goat Cheese Flatbread

Servings: 4
Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

2 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme
1/2 pound whole wheat pizza dough
1/2 cup fresh blueberries
4 thin slices Prosciutto di Parma
1/4 cup crumbled goat cheese
1 tbsp honey

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place rack in lowest position. In a small bowl, stir together olive oil, garlic, and thyme; set aside. On lightly floured work surface, roll out dough into 6- x 10-inch oval, about 1/4-inch thick. Brush with olive oil mixture. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. While crust is baking, lightly mash blueberries using back of a wooden spoon in small bowl; spread over crust. Top with prosciutto and goat cheese. Drizzle with honey. Bake for an additional 10 minutes to crisp prosciutto and melt cheese.

Blueberry and Goat Cheese Salad

Servings: 4
Prep Time: 10 minutes

4 cups mixed salad greens
3 to 4 ounces goat cheese or other soft cheese
1 cup fresh blueberries
1/2 cup pecans or walnuts*
1/4 cup prepared Italian or balsamic dressing

Arrange greens on four salad plates, dividing evenly. Slice or shape goat cheese to form four rounds. Arrange in center of each plate. Sprinkle

blueberries and pecans on greens. Drizzle dressing over salad

* To crisp nuts and bring out their full flavor, toast them in a 300° F oven for about 5 minutes

Blueberry Balsamic Dressing

Prep time: Yield: 9 servings

1 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
9 sprigs fresh thyme
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoons honey
pinch of natural fine sea salt
6 tablespoons quality olive oil

Place all ingredients - except olive oil - in a small sauce pan, over medium heat for 10-15 minutes. Lightly press down on blueberries to break them open. Remove from heat and allow to cool for a few minutes then remove fresh thyme and whisk in olive oil, or blend until smooth to reach a smoother consistency. Drizzle dressing over salad within 15 minutes of serving.



Who would have thought that something this sweet, delectable and delicious could also be deemed good for our brains and so much more! Recipes and photos courtesy of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council.

