



# *Behold, the beloved cranberry*



*It's* (almost) the most wonderful time of the year: cranberry season. When I was a little kid, slices of jellied cranberry sauce from a can were not uncommon on the Thanksgiving table at my aunt and uncle's house or at our home as a cold-weather side dish. I loved it. Then, when I was a little older, I realized my grandma (on the other side of the family) made sauce from fresh cranberries each Thanksgiving and Christmas. I loved that even more.

In fact, when I saw bags of fresh cranberries at the grocery store I'd beg my mom to get some and let me make the cranberry sauce myself. She was brave to turn a 10- or 12-year-old loose with a pan of boiling water and sugar and tart berries that tended to explode — fortunately, there were never any serious calamities.

Illustrations: iStock

Fast-forward to today and I still eagerly await the first sighting of fresh cranberries at my grocery store in the fall. Beyond the normal cranberry sauce, I've roasted them with fresh rosemary for a savory relish and have tucked them into a fruit crisp with other berries. And I've dreamed up a cranberry pie.

All this to say — fresh cranberries are a normal and much-beloved part of my family's food culture. I assumed it was that way for everybody.

Not quite.

When Ashley Nickle and I featured cranberries a couple of years ago

on an episode of our video series *Millennials Eat*, I found out Ashley had never eaten them before.

*Fresh Trends 2021* statistics show that 18-39-year-olds are now the most likely age groups to purchase cranberries, with 17% of those 18-29 and 16% of those 30-39 saying they'd bought the fruit in the past 12 months. The next most-likely-to-buy age bracket was those 60+.

Overall, 14% of *Fresh Trends* respondents said they'd purchased fresh cranberries in the past 12 months.

Wanting to find out whether other people 18-39 had experiences more

**Scan the QR code to see the Millennial Eat video on cranberries.**





similar to mine or to Ashley's, I asked my Facebook friends for their cranberry stories. Among the 16 respondents, four were men and nine were in my target age group.

Almost everyone either said they loved baking and cooking with cranberries, or that they grew up with a traditional family cranberry recipe (sauce, chutney, fluff, Jello and cranberry ice were among those mentioned).

Only one person said he didn't like cranberries, because they were too sour or tart. But another man, a 30-something friend from high school, said the cranberry sauce he makes every year for his family's Thanksgiving is the dish he looks forward to most.

One friend said she grew up eating canned cranberry sauce and likes to snack on the dried fruit, but wouldn't know what to do with fresh cranberries. Many others in the 20- to 39-year-old range did, however, if the number of recipes exchanged in the thread was any indication.

The youngest person to contribute her thoughts (my 20-something cousin) said cranberry juice is the only thing she'll drink besides water, but that she's never actually tried the fruit itself as she was a picky eater growing up.

I told her that, if she comes home for Christmas, I'll fix her all manner of delicious cranberry dishes. *pmg*

— *Amelia Freidline*