



# Blueberries

- ◆ Native Americans once called them "star berries," because the five points of blueberry blossoms make a star shape. Blueberry juice had medicinal value for Native Americans as well and was used to treat persistent coughs and other illnesses. Blueberries were commonly used to make pemmican, a jerky type of dried food packed for sustenance on long journeys. They also used blueberries in non-traditional ways like making dye from blueberry juice for textiles and baskets.
- ◆ The traditional blue paint used in the homes of Shakers was made from blueberry skins, sage blossoms, indigo, and milk.
- ◆ Early colonists made gray paint out of blueberries by boiling them in milk.
- ◆ During the Civil War of the 1860s, blueberries were collected, packaged, and sent to Union troops for use as a food staple.
- ◆ The annual harvest of North American blueberries would cover a four lane highway from Chicago to New York if spread out in a single layer.
- ◆ America's favorite muffin is, of course, blueberry.
- ◆ Blueberries are one of the only natural foods that are truly blue in color.
- ◆ The pale, powder-like protective coating on the skin of blueberries is called "bloom."
- ◆ The blueberry industry of North America ships over 500 metric tons of fresh berries to Japan each year and over 100 metric tons to Iceland.