

Black Currants

HOW TO CHOOSE AND STORE

Choose black shiny berries that are firm and undamaged. They can be stored unwashed in the fridge for a few days, lightly wrapped allowing some air flow. To freeze, place them as a single layer on a tray in the freezer. Once frozen, transfer to a sealed container. This makes it easier to separate them for use. They can also be dehydrated for storage.



HOW TO USE AND EAT

Black currants are tart, slightly sour berries. They can be added to muffins, cakes, pies, and most other desserts. They can also be added to drinks, made into syrups, or dehydrated and used to make tea. The leaves of the plant can be used also for a healthy tea; choose clean, undamaged leaves, fresh or dehydrated.

BLACK CURRANT CORDIAL

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 lb black currants (or any fruit)

Heat water and sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat and stir to dissolve. Add fruit and simmer until the black currants are well blended with the syrup. Cool. Strain out the remaining berries. Bottle and store in the fridge, or freeze, leaving plenty of room in the bottle for expansion.

Dilute the syrup with lemonade, sparkling water, club soda, or ginger ale for a light and refreshing summer drink. Adding hot water and/or honey can make for a wonderful warm winter drink.

SIMPLE BLACK CURRANT JAM

- 1 ½ cups blackcurrants (or other berries)
- ½ tablespoon chia seeds
- 4 tablespoons maple syrup, honey, or sugar (to taste)
- Lemon peel (optional, adds a lemony zing)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Blender or food processor

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor. Blend until it resembles runny jam. The chia seeds take a short while but will thicken the jam. Keep refrigerated. This will not keep quite as long as regular jam will, because it has no preservatives and is not heat processed. Serve on toast, crackers, ice cream, cheese, pancakes, or whatever inspires you.