



About the Home Economist: Karla Jones Seidita has cooked up a very tasty life. She has been a restaurant and bakery owner, award-winning food writer, lifestyle radio host, cookbook author, country inn proprietor, and farm-to-table teacher. Currently she spends her days at her laptop and in her garden in Sumerduck. Find her at cheesecakefarms.com

— wine&dine —

It's Not Thanksgiving Without the Cranberries!

Side dish recipes for your holiday feast

BY KARLA JONES SEIDITA

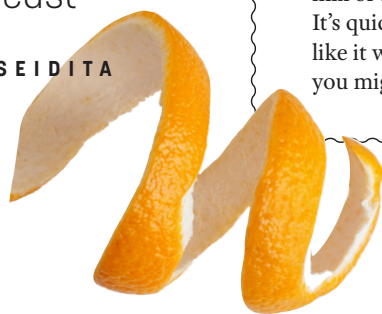
Does your Thanksgiving dinner cranberry sauce come out of a can? Nothing wrong with that. It's an American classic!

But this year, add sparkle and panache to your table with a luscious homemade cranberry sauce.

Making cranberry sauce from fresh cranberries is easier than you think. Quick, too. Make it days ahead to take the pressure off all that last minute dinner prep. These recipes will keep about a week in the fridge (and get better tasting).

Doesn't your Thanksgiving feast deserve homemade cranberry sauce?

Let's get into the kitchen.



Apple, Raisins, and Walnut Cranberry Sauce

While the turkey may take the most cooking time, it's really the easiest part of Thanksgiving dinner. It's the rest of the meal that requires work. With the oven occupied for hours it's difficult to juggle side dishes, casseroles and pies that also need oven time. Make this yummy cranberry sauce a few days in advance and that's one less thing you'll have to do on Thanksgiving Day.

No-Cook Fresh Cranberry and Orange Relish

This is my favorite cranberry sauce recipe. Since it isn't cooked, it's technically a relish but that doesn't make it any less the perfect accompaniment to turkey. I make it every year and hope there are enough leftovers from dinner to top the turkey sandwiches that follow.

Ordinarily, using the skin of an orange with its white pith yields a bitter taste but, in combination with fresh cranberries, a magical mix of deliciousness is the result. It's quick to make. Easy, too. I like it with only ¼ cup sugar but you might like it sweeter.

MAKES 3 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

1 large, seed-free, thick-skinned orange
1 (12 - 16 oz.) bag fresh cranberries
Sugar to taste (¼ - 1 cup)

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash the orange and cut in half. Discard any remaining white membrane in the center.
2. Cut orange into chunks
3. Put the chunks (yes, with the peel) into the food processor. Pulse till finely chopped.
4. Add washed and drained cranberries.
5. Pulse briefly to chop cranberries. (Don't over process or the cranberries will liquify.)
6. Remove from processor.
7. Stir in sugar to taste.
8. Chill.

MAKES 4 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups apple cider
1 cup brown sugar
1 (12 - 16 oz.) bag fresh cranberries
½ cup dried apples (cut into ½ inch pieces)
1/3 cup raisins (dark or light)
¼ cup walnuts (halves and pieces)

DIRECTIONS

1. Put cider and brown sugar into a medium pot. Bring to a boil.
2. Stir to dissolve sugar.
3. Add cranberries, dried apples and raisins.
4. Cook (uncovered) till cranberries pop - about 5 minutes.
5. Using a slotted spoon, remove the fruit to a heat safe container.
6. Continue cooking (uncovered) until liquid is syrupy and reduced by half - about 10 minutes.
7. Pour reduced syrup over cooked fruit. Stir.
8. Cool to room temperature - about 1 hour.
9. Chill.



Ported Cranberry Sauce

Fresh cranberries poached in port wine and brown sugar. Could anything be more delicious with your Thanksgiving turkey? But don't stop there. These ported cranberries are also terrific with ham, roast pork, chops, duck and game.

Need more ideas?

Spoon the ported cranberries over a nice, warm, melting brie.

Use to top vanilla ice cream, cheesecake, or toasted pound cake.

Stir into plain yogurt.

Serve Ported Cranberries Jubilee instead of Cherries Jubilee.

Make Ported Cranberry Gingerbread (recipe follows)

You'll think of a thousand ways to serve these divine cranberries!



MAKES 3 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups port wine
1 ½ cups dark brown sugar
1 (12 - 16 oz.) bag fresh
cranberries

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix wine and brown sugar in a medium pot.
2. Bring to a gentle boil. Stir to dissolve the sugar.
3. Add the washed and drained cranberries.
4. Cook until they all pop – about 5 minutes.
5. Using a slotted spoon, remove popped cranberries and place into a heat safe container.
6. Continuing boiling the liquid (uncovered) until syrupy and reduced by half – about 10 minutes.
7. Pour reduced syrup over the popped cranberries. Stir.
8. Cool to room temperature – about 1 hour.
9. Chill.





Ported Cranberry Gingerbread

Rich and dark and oh-so-moist. The addition of Ported Cranberry Sauce to this not-too-spicy gingerbread romances it into a love affair of yumminess. Makes a lovely, unexpected addition to your Thanksgiving dessert selection and leftovers (if there are any!) make a wonderful breakfast. Spread slices thickly with butter and enjoy with your morning coffee or tea. YUM!



SERVES 6 TO 9
PAN SIZE: 1 (8 -INCH SQUARE)

INGREDIENTS

½ cup sugar
1 stick butter (softened)
1 teaspoon dried ginger
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 egg
1/3 cup ported cranberries
(room temperature)
½ cup molasses
1 1/3 cups all purpose flour
½ cup boiling water

FOR SERVING

Additional ported cranberries
Whipped cream

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease pan or coat with baking spray.
2. Using a mixer with the whisk attachment, cream sugar, butter, ginger, salt and baking soda.
3. Add egg and whip till fluffy – about 1 minute.
4. Stir in cranberries and molasses. (Mixture may look curdled. That's OK.)
5. Add flour and boiling water. Mix well.
6. Pour into prepared pan. Bake till gingerbread is firm to a light touch in the center, pulls away slightly from the sides of the pan and a toothpick comes out clean. Do not over bake.
7. Cool in pan.
8. Serve with additional ported cranberries (room temperature or slightly warmed) and whipped cream. 