

Blackberries— Immune Support for the Autumn

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The blackberry picking season has just started and with all the rain we have had they should grow big and juicy. The commercial ones have been on the shelves for a while but just cannot compare in taste to the wild ones.

Blackberries are a good source of vitamins C and E as well as other antioxidants which are important in protecting from heart disease, cancer and inflammatory conditions. They also support the immune system. So now is just the right time to go berry picking and give your immunity a boost before the cold season.



Blackberries are also a good source of the minerals magnesium and manganese which are thought to be important for the bodies handling of sugar (glucose). And with a very low glycaemic index blackberries do not have much of an effect on blood sugar themselves.

Blackberries also contain folic acid which is important during pregnancy but also for a healthy heart as folic acid, together with other B vitamins, helps to keep homocysteine levels down. Elevated levels of homocysteine have been associated with a large number of chronic condition including heart disease.

A pie or crumble are delicious ways of eating blackberries, but try them also raw with your breakfast cereal or as a smoothie. See below for some ideas.

Recipes

Blackberry Smoothie

1 handful of fresh or frozen blackberries
½ banana
1 cup of skimmed milk or soya milk
Pinch of vanilla powder

Put all ingredients into a blender and whiz until smooth. Enjoy immediately!

Blackberry crumble

A hearty and healthy dessert after a light meal and popular with children. The use of oats, nuts and xylitol or agave syrup for the crumble makes this a low glycaemic index/load dish.

Serves 4-6

For the filling:

4 apples, peeled and cored and diced

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp water

1 tbsp of xylitol or agave syrup

500 g blackberries

1 tsp cinnamon

For the crumble:

150g porridge oats

3 tbsp butter or coconut oil

2-3 tbsp Xylitol or agave syrup or brown sugar

100g ground mixed nuts

For the banana cream:

2 large ripe bananas

150 ml milk or soya milk

1 tsp of agave or maple syrup

Heat apples with lemon juice, water, xylitol or agave syrup and cinnamon and simmer until apples begin to soften. Add blackberries and leave to stand for a few minutes.

Mix all the crumble ingredients until it resembles breadcrumbs, either very gently with a food processor, making sure it does not over-process the crumble, or with your fingers. Using your fingers makes it easier to get the desired crumble texture.

Fill apple/blackberry mixture into an ovenproof dish and cover with the crumble. Bake at 180°C for approximately 25-30 minutes until crumble starts to turn golden.

Meanwhile blend all the ingredients for the banana cream until smooth and put into the fridge until the crumble is ready. Alternatively you can of course serve the crumble with custard or a good quality vanilla ice-cream.