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8 RECIPE IDEAS FOR DRIED CHERRIES

posted by Christine Gable on Wednesday, Jun 30, 2010

Are you looking for some recipe ideas for dried cherries? Some quick, good ways to use dried sour cherries? Mmmm, they're tart yet sweet. Soft yet chewy. Richly flavored yet good for you. The Montmorency tart cherry is a favorite snack in any of its many forms: fresh, juiced, or dried. It's also the reason I recently accepted a press tour invitation to travel to



Door County, Wisconsin, home of the classic Montmorency tart red cherry. Now why, you may wonder, would I rush through airports, hurtle myself down many miles of highways just to get a taste of cherries? Well, being a recipe developer means that I'm passionate about food—and when given the opportunity to visit Door County, an area with a long-standing Montmorency cherry history, I'm a goner. Really, what could be better than eating my way through a new locale while learning about it? (Especially when we're talking cherry pie, cherry crisp, cherry coffeecake, cherry wine ...)

All this cherry tasting got me thinking it would be great to have all the quick ways to use this dried fruit all in

one easy-to-use list. Whether or not you'll have a chance to pick fresh cherries in your own locale, dried cherries are always in season. Thanks to Country Ovens and Orchard Country, I had the opportunity to taste-test many Montmorency cherries and cherry products. And since the bags of dried cherries that I brought home are already dwindling, it looks like I'll be ordering more very soon. (Check out the Country Ovens online store and Orchard Country online store and have them shipped directly to your home.) Dried cherries pack a lot of zing into one bite—it takes 8 pounds of fresh cherries to equal 1 pound of dried. Like other types of dried fruit, dried Montmorency cherries are not low in calories, but a little truly go a

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long way since they're so high in flavor. Best of all, they're quick and oh-so-easy to add to recipes! They come bagged and ready-to-use so it's up to you whether or not you use 'em whole or chop into smaller pieces.

Here are 8 quick ways to enjoy dried cherries. Stay tuned for more cherry recipes, photos and trip tidbits in my upcoming travel journal entries on Wisconsin Wednesdays. Lots more to come!

1. **Salads** – Spruce up lettuce, spinach, green or red leaf lettuce (or plain pre-bagged salad) with cherries and a vinaigrette dressing. Try some endive or dandelion greens—the slight bitterness accents the cherries' sweetness. Dried cherries can also be added to fruit salads, coleslaws, and chicken, turkey or tuna salad.

2. **Pie** – Can't have a listing about cherries without pie, eh! Just one-half cup of dried cherries ups the ante on cherry pie flavor—yes, it gets even better. Or add a twist to other fruit pies like apple or peach for added color and flavor.

3. **Trail Mix** – Salty and crunchy plus chewy and sweet. The combo of nuts and dried fruit is a classic snack and cherries are perfect in there too. Try making your own with favorite nuts (almonds, walnuts, pistachios) with a crunchy base (pretzels, chex cereals, soy nuts) and toss in a bit of sweetness of choice with dried cherries, raisins or even some chocolate chips and M&Ms (chocolate-covered cherries are perfect too).

4. **Baked Goods & Breads** – It's just about impossible to go wrong here—think banana bread, zucchini bread, chocolate cake or oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies. They all taste great when you toss in some dried cherries.

5. **Stuffing** – Whether white, whole-wheat or cornbread, stuffing gets an exciting flavor boost from just a handful of cherries added before baking. Dice whole cherries before tossing in if you prefer smaller zingy bites.

6. **Spreads** – Here's the perfect bagel complement, especially if you like blueberry or plain bagels: chop some dried cherries and stir them into the cream cheese. Spread on a lightly toasted bagel – yum!

7. **Roasts** – Whether using the Dutch oven or slowcooker, tossing in a handful of dried cherries adds a delicious yet mysterious fruity sweetness with richness and depth. Everyone will wonder what your secret is!

8. **Out-of-Hand** – It's the last but certainly not the least. It's actually my favorite way to eat dried Montmorency cherries—straight from the bag! They give a quick energy boost, they satisfy that need for a quick snack, and best of all, they're always ready to grab-and-go.

What is *your* favorite way to use dried cherries? Please share (just fill in the comment box below). I'll be adding recipes in the coming weeks and would love to share your favorite here too (Submit Your Recipe)!



Tags: cherries, quick summer recipes

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