

CRANBERRY PART TWO

My favorite part of Thanksgiving dinner is the cranberries. I love cranberry in just about all its forms, from raw cranberry relish to cooked cranberry sauce. Years ago I heard Narsai David on KCBS do a recipe for cranberry whiskey chutney which I made. It was delicious and fortunately KCBS has it on their website. So with thanks to Narsai David, here it is.

You'll need a 12 ounce package of cranberries, one orange, washed, quartered and seeded, a medium onion, peeled and cut into large chunks, 1/3 cup of vinegar—I used cider vinegar, 1/4 cup of bourbon or scotch whisky, a 1-inch knob of fresh ginger, peeled and grated, 1 1/2 cups of brown sugar, and a tablespoon of mustard seeds.

I make this in a food processor, as it is really easy. Wash, quarter and seed your orange and put it into the food processor, peel and all. Process for about 20-30 seconds, then add the onion. Process until the onion is coarsely chopped—you don't want a puree or a paste. Then place the processed orange and onion into a saucepan with the bag of cranberries, the 1/3 cup vinegar, the 1/4 cup of whiskey, the 1-inch knob of peeled and grated ginger, the 1 1/2 cups of brown sugar and the tablespoon of mustard seed. Bring the mixture to the boil then lower the heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 25-30 minutes, checking from time to time to make sure that it doesn't get too dry. Turn off the heat and let it cool. The flavor will improve if you make it a couple of days before serving. Store it in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Of course there's my favorite raw cranberry relish. You'll need a bag of cranberries—even straight from the freezer works for this recipe, plus one naval orange, washed, cut into quarters and the seeds removed, and a cup of sugar. Put all the ingredients into your food processor and process until fairly finely chopped. But again, you don't want a paste. Scrape into a bowl, cover and put in the refrigerator for at least a day before serving.

Oranges aren't the only fruit that goes well with cranberries. For a cranberry and pear relish, peel and core two firm pears and cut them into large chunks and put them in your food processor. Add a bag of cranberries. Add 1/2 lemon, seeds removed. Process until coarsely grated. Add two tablespoons of honey, 1/2 cup of sugar and a pinch of salt and process quickly until thoroughly blended. Store in the refrigerator until you're ready to use. I also like to add some minced crystallized ginger into the food processor with the cranberries and lemon.

And whole cranberry sauce is real easy to make. All you do is bring one cup of sugar and one cup of water to the boil in a medium sauce pan. Then add a bag of cranberries and bring the mixture back to the boil. Turn the heat down and boil gently for about 10 minutes, stirring from time to time. Cover and let it cool to room temperature, and store in the refrigerator until ready to use. Leftover whole cranberry sauce is wonderful in sandwiches on whole wheat bread with sliced leftover turkey and some cream cheese and a leaf of lettuce.

To do this Tex-Mex style, make the whole cranberry sauce as I just described. Then when you turn the heat off, stir into the cranberry a seeded and finely chopped jalapeno pepper, 1/4 teaspoon of ground cumin, a chopped green onion, a teaspoon or two of fresh lime juice, and about 1/4 cup of chopped fresh cilantro.

You can even make a cranberry stuffing. You'll need two cups of cornbread, either home-baked cornbread cut into cubes or you can buy cornbread stuffing cubes at the store, plus 1/2 pound of sausage meat, cooked, drained and crumbled, one cup of fresh cranberries, 1/2 cup of chopped onion, 1/3 cup of chopped pecans, 2 teaspoons of dried thyme and 1/2 cup of canned chicken broth.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix together the two cups of cornbread, the half cup of cooked sausage, the cup of cranberries, the half cup of chopped onion, the one-third cup of chopped pecans, and the two teaspoons of dried thyme. Season to taste with a pinch of salt and some freshly ground black pepper. Add the half cup of chicken broth and mix well. You can add more chicken broth if you prefer a moister stuffing. Put this into a medium size casserole dish and bake in your preheated oven for 30 minutes or until heated through. This makes about 3 cups of stuffing.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful Thanksgiving, this is Steve Muni for the Hometown Kitchen.