



INSPIRED K-12 MENUS WITH **BLUEBERRIES**



A TOOLKIT FROM THE U.S. Highbush BLUEBERRY COUNCIL



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Who Is USHBC?

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) is a grower-driven organization working to be the global leader in knowledge, programs, and resources used and shared by the blueberry industry.

We support domestic and international farmers who have a passion for growing delicious and high-quality blueberries that inspire your students to grab a boost of blue.

Through collaboration and innovation, USHBC is moving our industry forward to bring you the best-quality fruit and share the endless possibilities of blueberries.



Blueberry Formats for K-12 Foodservice

Fresh Blueberries



Definition & Processing

Fresh blueberries are harvested, precooled, sorted, and packaged for delivery.

Use Case

Due to their minimal processing, fresh blueberries have a relatively short shelf life. They are very delicate and will get crushed in industrial equipment. For these reasons, fresh blueberries may be better suited for applications with gentle processing such as hand placement and foodservice applications such as salads or parfaits.

Individually Quick Frozen Blueberries



Definition & Processing

Fresh ripe blueberries are harvested, precooled, washed, and individually quick frozen.

Use Case

IQF blueberries are a fantastic substitute in most cases for fresh berries in a plant environment. Once cooked, it is hard to distinguish IQF berries from fresh berries. They provide the burst and juiciness of a fresh berry while having a long shelf life. Because they are free flowing, as opposed to case frozen or straight pack blueberries, IQF berries can usually be processed frozen. IQF berries provide the individual fresh fruit identity, so any formulation where the fruit identity is important would benefit from IQF.

Case Frozen Blueberries



Definition & Processing

Fresh ripe blueberries are harvested, precooled, washed, and frozen in 30-pound cases.

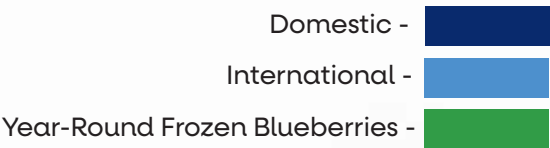
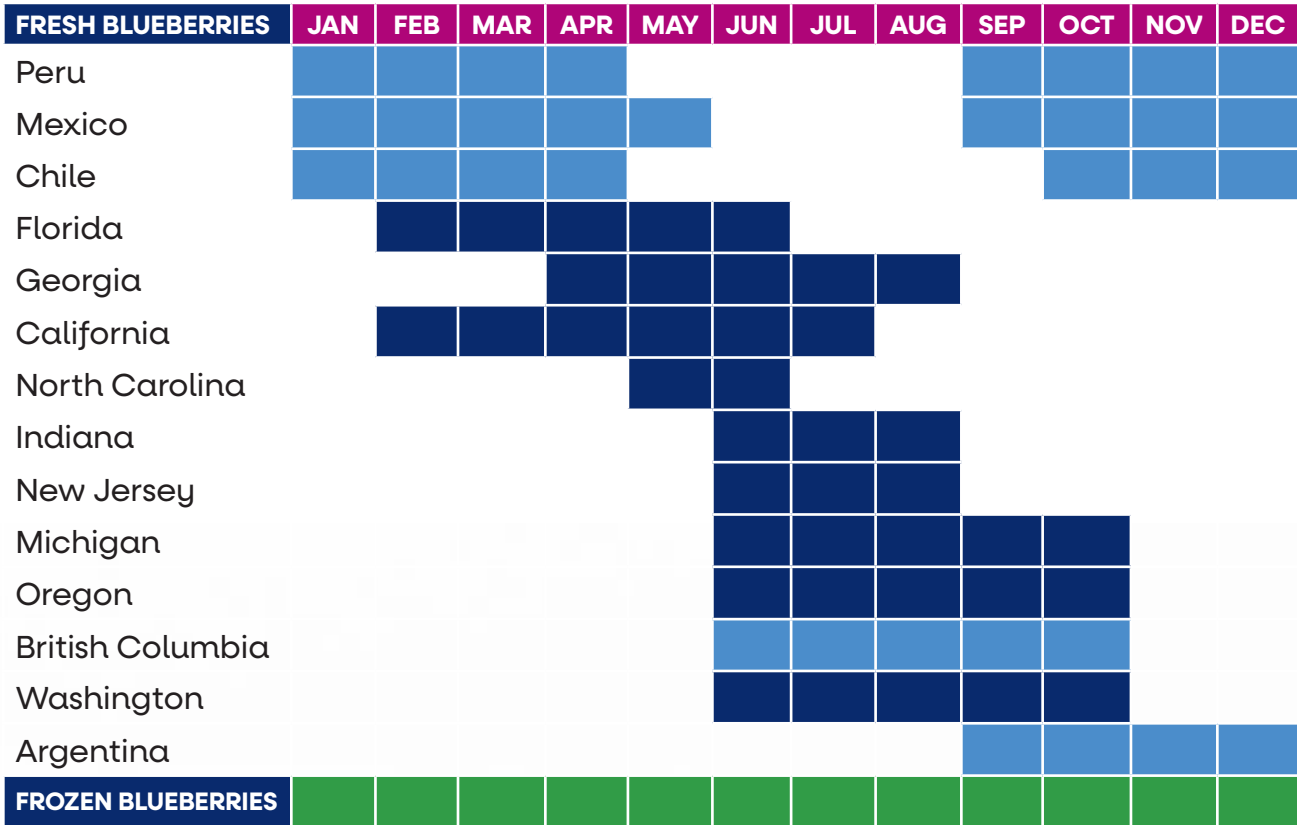
Use Case

Identical uses to IQF blueberries. In some instances, there may be slightly more clumping of berries and juice/water crystals making these berries best for uses where they are pureéd such as smoothies, sauces, and compotes.

Year-Round Availability of Blueberries

Blueberries thrive under clear blue skies, with hot days and cool nights. They're native to North America where the harvest runs from early spring to early fall.

During the North American winter, South America is experiencing summer, and our international farmers keep fresh blueberries available from fall to early spring.



National School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern Chart

	GRADES K-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week (Minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^{b,c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^{b,c}	0	0	0
Dark green	0	0	0
Red/Orange	0	0	0
Beans and peas (legumes)	0	0	0
Starchy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq) ^d	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq) ^e	0	0	0
Fluid Milk (cups) ^f	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{g,h}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Target 1 (mg)	≤540	≤600	≤640
Trans fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^aFood items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup. ^bOne-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as 1/2 cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength. ^cSchools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Vegetables may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week of any such substitution must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), or "Other vegetables" subgroups, as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii) of this chapter. ^dAt least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched. Schools may substitute 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate for 1 oz. eq. of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met. ^eThere is no meat/meat alternate requirement. ^fAll fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service. ^gThe average daily calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values). ^hDiscretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent milk fat are not allowed.

National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern Chart

	GRADES K-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week (Minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c,d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^e	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-9 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid Milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤1,230	≤1,360	≤1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1 A (mg) ^{h,i}	≤1,110	≤1,225	≤1,280
Trans fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^aFood items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup. ^bOne-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as 1/2 cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength. ^cLarger amounts of these vegetables may be served. ^dThis category consists of "Other vegetables" as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the "Other vegetables" requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section. ^eAny vegetable subgroup may be offered to meet the total weekly vegetable requirement. ^fAt least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched. ^gAll fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service. ^hDiscretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent are not allowed. ⁱSodium Interim Target 1A must be met no later than July 1, 2023 (SY 2023-2024).

Blueberry Recipe Inspiration

Unleash your culinary creativity with the endless recipe possibilities using blueberries. The recipes below can offer boundless inspiration to spruce up your school menus.



Blueberry Ancient Grain Cookie



Blueberry Cinnamon Streusel Toast



Blueberry Cream Cheese French Toast Bake



Savory Blueberry Chicken Crepes



Blueberry Playa Bowl



Breakfast Blue-rito



Blueberry and Turkey Protein Bites



Gwinnett County PSD Case Study

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council recently partnered with Chef Rachel Petraglia, Culinary Coordinator/Executive Chef for Gwinnett County Public School District, which covers greater metro Atlanta and includes 139 K-12 schools and over 177,000 students, to bring more blueberries to their menus. This partnership sparked excellent menu innovation and resulted in two new permanent menu items, Blueberry Overnight Oats and a Blueberry Smoothie, as well as a number of additional menu integrations for blueberries.

Specifically, **frozen blueberries proved to be an impressively labor-efficient and cost-effective option.** “With frozen blueberries, there’s no waste. We use them year-round in anything, and even use the liquid that we drain from thawing them for lemonade and barbecue sauce,” said Chef Rachel. **In addition to the weekly menued smoothies and overnight oats, Chef Rachel’s team has been utilizing blueberries in vinaigrettes, salads, sauces, and fruit bakes.** She explains, “From a back-of-house perspective, our newest managers didn’t even need to be trained on how to thaw and use frozen blueberries because the berries and their uses were so intuitive.” Chef Rachel also shared, **“Initially we worried that blueberries might be more expensive, but we found that frozen blueberries were right in line with many other fruits** we were using, like canned pineapple and frozen peaches.”

When asked how these menu items were received, Chef Rachel said, “Blueberries played so well throughout the district. From students to teachers to principals ... blueberries, being colorful and a superfruit yet still approachable, have been easy to sell and market. We will definitely keep using blueberries on our menus.”



Gwinnett County’s Winning Recipes



Blueberry Overnight Oats



Servings: 50

54	Ounces	Breakfast oatmeal, uncooked
40	Ounces	Brown sugar
2.25	Ounces	Cinnamon, ground
74	fl Ounces	2% Milk
250	Ounces	Vanilla yogurt
90	Ounces	Blueberries, frozen - thawed before use, excess liquid discarded

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, and cinnamon.
2. Add milk and yogurt, combine.
3. Portion mixture into 12-ounce cups - ¾ cup each.
4. Top with ¼ cup blueberries.
5. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
6. Serve. Optional: garnish with brown sugar.

Blueberry Smoothie



18.75	Pounds	Blueberries, frozen
6.25	Gallons	Vanilla yogurt
4	Ounces	Clover honey

1. Place blueberries in large blender and blend for 4 minutes or until smooth.
2. Add yogurt and honey to blender. Blend 1 minute.
3. Portion into 12-ounce cups. Hold in chiller.

Servings: 100



Blueberry Nutrition: Health Benefits of This Superfood

One serving (a handful or a cup) of blueberries:

★ Contains just 80 calories and only naturally occurring sugars

★ Contributes essential nutrients including vitamin C, vitamin K, manganese, and phytonutrients called polyphenols

★ The group of polyphenols includes anthocyanins (163mg/100g), which are compounds that give blueberries their blue color

★ Is a good source of fiber

For more information regarding blueberry nutrition, please visit <https://healthprofessionals.blueberry.org/>



Marketing Materials (digital, print-ready files)

Grab a Boost of Blue!

The Blueberry Method
An easy way and nutritious solution to eating well—just **grab a handful, rinse, and enjoy!**

Boost your daily recommended servings of fruit!
Get 4 essential nutrients.

- 1** Fiber
Heart health, feeling full, staying regular, keeping cholesterol in check
- 2** Vitamin C
A healthy immune system
- 3** Vitamin K
Bone metabolism, regulating blood clotting
- 4** Manganese
Converting proteins, carbs, and fats into energy, bone development

1 Serving
80 Calories

Fresh or frozen blueberries are infinitely snackable.
Whether you're just grabbing a handful on the go or sprinkling them into your favorite recipes for a healthy boost, you'll love how versatile your blueberry stash can be!

Blueberry Turmeric Smoothie Blueberry Cinnamon Streusel Toast Breakfast Blue-Rito Blueberry Pistachio Parfait

Heart-Check certification does not apply to research, scientific information, or recipes unless expressly stated.

Find blueberry scientific research, health information, recipes, tips, and more at ushbc.blueberry.org

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(a) - Blueberries nutrition infographic

Grab a Boost of Blue!

BLUEBERRIES ARE:

- an excellent source of vitamin K
- a good source of vitamin C
- an excellent source of manganese
- a good source of fiber

(b) - Cafeteria poster

The Life Cycle of Blueberries

Join us as we journey through the life cycle of a blueberry from tiny seed to plump berry!

Seed
Starting as a tiny seed, blueberries are part of a plant family that includes the flowering crabapple, mountain laurel, and heather plants.

Sow
The best time to plant your seed is in the fall or spring. While blueberry bushes are easy to grow, they do prefer the sun.

Mature
Blueberry bushes thrive on cool nights, clear blue skies, and hot days. The average height of a mature blueberry bush is about 6 feet!

Bloom
In the spring, clusters of beautiful white blossoms pop up all over the bushes, which are then pollinated by bees.

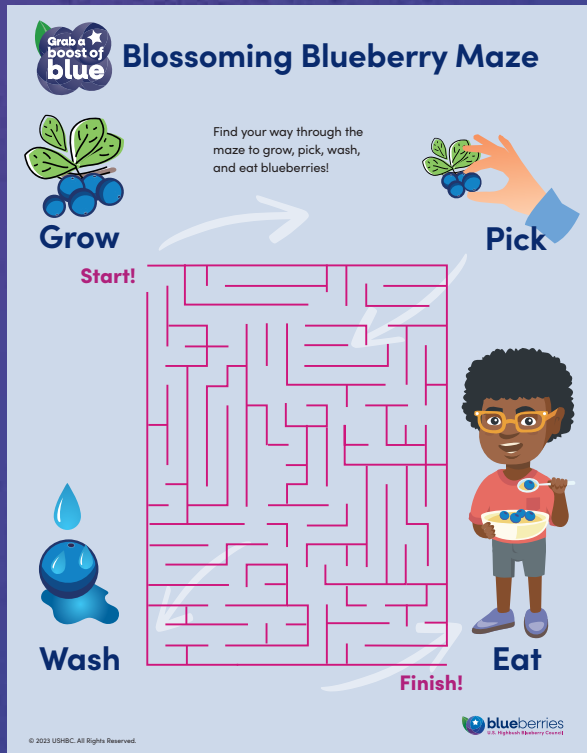
Harvest
Now is the time to pick nature's little blue dynamite! Fresh blueberries are mostly picked by hand, while blueberries that will be frozen are gathered with large harvesting machines.

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(c) - Life cycle handout

Blueberry Activities

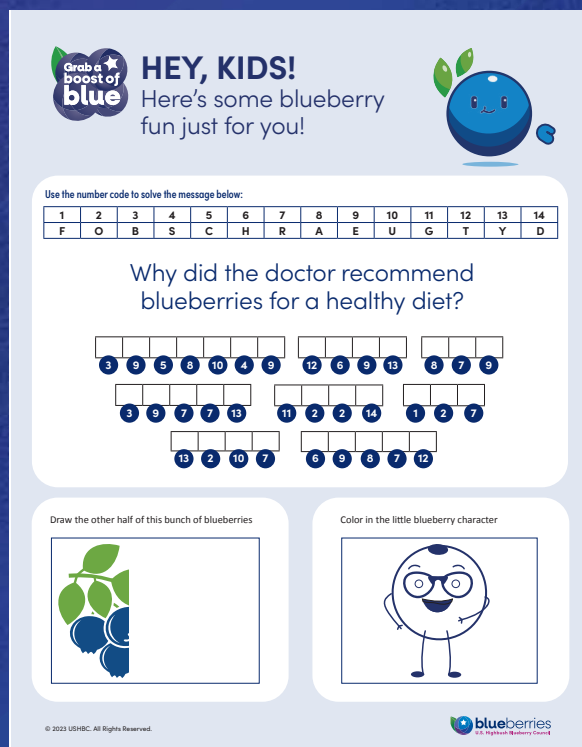
for Students



(d) - Blossoming blueberry maze



(e) - Blueberry word search



(f) - Brain buster