



Cascade Delight raspberries
at Viridian Farms

in berry land

Feast on Oregon's plump, juicy raspberries,
blackberries, and blueberries

Spiced blueberry pie



A giant bowl of berries was before me: raspberries, blueberries, blackberries. They were perfect: ripe, deeply colored, tangy and sweet in a single bite. I had found berry nirvana at a wedding in Eugene, Oregon. A few years later, on another trip to the state, I found it again. Blackberries grew everywhere, and we picked them for hours, making juicy cobblers and dark jams at our beach rental. Every now and again, a berry will jog these taste memories. But most are a disappointment by comparison. There's a reason: Northwest berries taste better because growing conditions are ideal. Days are warm but not hot. Nights are cool but not cold. Summers are dry, winters are wet, and berries are happy.



ABOVE, FROM LEFT Leslie Lukas-Recio and Manuel Recio at Viridian Farms, south of Portland; just-picked raspberries at the farm; flats of berries, carefully filled (gentle picking and handling is vital, especially for hollow berries like raspberries).

While at the Portland Farmers Market recently, I took a sample from a table laden with blueberries. They were bursting with juice and tasted like, well, blueberries—sweet and earthy at the same time, fresh and bright but faintly spicy. I needed to see where those berries came from. I needed to see how they grew.

Off to berry land

I drove south from Portland past acres of hops, with their tangled vines forming mini forests along the road, and took the Wheatland Ferry across the Willamette River to sandy-soiled Grand Island and Viridian Farms.

There they were: row upon row of blueberry bushes, some almost tall enough to qualify as trees. Herbs and bramble berries covered the rest of the field. On this sunny day, with a breeze moving the trees overhead, the island farm was the picturesque ideal that people hold in their heads when they think of moving to the country, buying a little place, and growing something tasty.

Leslie Lukas-Recio and Manuel Recio grow berries all summer at Viridian, where Leslie grew up. Neither ever dreamed of being a farmer. “It was the last thing I would have thought I’d become,” says Manuel, a native of Florida, who studied business. “I was out of here like a shot when I was 18,” Leslie recalls. “But one day my dad called to say he was going to sell the farm. Manuel and I were working in Portland for other people. We thought, Why not see what we can do on our own?”

That was four years ago. The simple blueberry and raspberry farm they took over now also yields blackberries, strawberries, and a whole range of European vegetables that they grow for farmers’ markets and Portland-area restaurants.

As a third-generation berry farmer, Leslie has eaten berries most ways. A favorite family treat is to stuff individual raspberries with Willamette Valley goat cheese or fresh ricotta. But of the many berries she grows, she’s loyal to one above all: “Blueberries are my favorite, by far. Fresh blueberries.”



Marionberry, blue cheese, and arugula salad

Fresh berries, smoky blue cheese, and peppery arugula: great with a rosé of Grenache or Syrah



Oregon is berry nirvana, but really, anywhere you can find lusciously ripe berries is heaven. The West is full of U-pick farms; fees vary from farm to farm but typically run between \$2.75 and \$4.50 per pound. Visit pickyourown.org for a farm near you.

For some of our favorites, go to sunset.com/upick



Blackberry hazelnut honey crisp

Foods that grow in the same place tend to taste good together, as this pairing of blackberries and hazelnuts proves.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 2 hours

MAKES 8 servings

36 oz. fresh or frozen blackberries (8 cups)

3 tbsp. quick-cooking tapioca

¼ cup berry blossom or wildflower honey

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

¾ cup shelled hazelnuts

¼ cup each flour and sugar

½ tsp. salt

½ cup each butter and quick-cooking rolled oats

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, toss berries with tapioca. In a small bowl, combine honey, lemon juice, and 1 tbsp. boiling water. Stir to dissolve honey. Add to berries and toss to combine. Put in an 8-by-8-in. baking pan and set aside.
2. Spread hazelnuts on a baking sheet and toast in oven until medium golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Rub nuts in a kitchen towel to remove skins; let nuts cool. In a food processor, pulse nuts until finely ground. Add flour, sugar, and salt and pulse to combine. Add butter and pulse until mixture forms a thick dough. Stir in oats. Drop in flattened 1-tsp. chunks over berries. Bake until topping is brown and berries are bubbling, about 1 hour. Let cool to set, 30 minutes.

PER SERVING 341 CAL., 50% (171 CAL.) FROM FAT; 3.7 G PROTEIN; 19 G FAT (7.7 G SAT.); 43 G CARBO (7.3 G FIBER); 282 MG SODIUM; 31 MG CHOL.

Blueberry sorbet

This bright-tasting sorbet gains an exquisite aroma from a small amount of lavender.

PREP AND COOK TIME 1 hour, plus at least 1½ hours of chilling and freezing time

MAKES About 5 cups

¾ cup sugar

¼ tsp. dried culinary lavender (optional)

¼ tsp. salt

3 pints fresh or frozen blueberries (6 cups)

3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1. In a saucepan, bring sugar, 1 cup water, and lavender, if using, to a boil. Add salt and simmer 2 minutes. Transfer sugar syrup to a metal bowl and let cool to room temperature. Strain and discard lavender.
2. In a blender, purée sugar syrup, blueberries, and lemon juice. Strain and discard seeds and skin. Cover and chill



Blackberry hazelnut honey crisp

Northwest berries: What to look for, and when

Berries are usually sold under their generic names, as blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries. The truth is, each type has many hybrids—which look and taste similar but mature at different times, thus extending the growing season. Occasionally they'll be labeled with their individual names; look for these varieties from the Northwest.

Blackberries

(July through September)

MARIONBERRIES The queen of blackberries, against whose deep flavor all other berries are judged.

BOYSENBERRIES Sweeter and juicier than marionberries, but less intense.

WILD EVERGREEN AND HIMALAYAN

Looked down on by cultivators as bitter and one-dimensional, these are the blackberries that grow on brambles around the West.

LOGANBERRIES A blackberry-raspberry cross, the red-hued loganberry dates from the 1880s and was a staple of the berry industry until the marionberry appeared in 1956. It's much bigger than a raspberry and is juicy and sweet, like a blackberry should be.

Blueberries

(June through September)

DUKE First to ripen; slightly sweeter than other varieties.

ELLIOTT Midseason; deep flavor makes them particularly good for baking.

AURORA Last to market—usually well into September.

Raspberries

(June, July, and September)

BLACK Short July season. Drier than red ones; seedy and a bit tart. Hard to find beyond local farmers' markets; available frozen from Sturm's Berry Farm (\$57–\$70 for 5 lbs., including shipping; sturmsberryfarm.com or 866/402-9058).

GOLDEN Sweeter and more delicately flavored than red ones.

RED Available throughout the growing season; rarely labeled with variety name.

sorbet mixture at least 30 minutes and up to overnight.

3. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to a freezer-safe dish, cover, and freeze until hard, at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

PER ½-CUP SERVING 108 CAL., 3% (2.7 CAL.) FROM FAT; 0.6 G PROTEIN; 0.3 G FAT (0 G SAT.); 28 G CARBO (2 G FIBER); 64 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Marionberry, blue cheese, and arugula salad

Marionberries are considered the most flavorful blackberries. If you can't find them, use ordinary blackberries instead.

PREP TIME 15 minutes

MAKES 4 servings

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1 tbsp. fresh thyme leaves, divided

¼ tsp. dry mustard

¼ tsp. each salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 oz. arugula (about 13 cups)

6 oz. marionberries or blackberries (1½ cups)

2 oz. mild blue cheese

1. In a salad bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, 1 tsp. thyme leaves, the mustard, ¼ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper.

2. Add arugula and gently toss until leaves are coated with dressing. Add berries and gently toss. Divide among 4 salad plates. Crumble ½ oz. cheese on each salad. Sprinkle with remaining thyme and salt and pepper to taste.

PER SERVING 175 CAL., 77% (135 CAL.) FROM FAT; 4.5 G PROTEIN; 15 G FAT (4.2 G SAT.); 7.8 G CARBO (2.7 G FIBER); 353 MG SODIUM; 11 MG CHOL.

Raspberry fool

A fool is the simplest of desserts—just whole or puréed fruit folded into whipped cream.

PREP TIME About 10 minutes

MAKES 8 servings

NOTES Frozen berries are fine here: Use 12 oz. berries and garnish with fresh mint leaves instead of fresh berries.

18 oz. raspberries (about 4½ cups; see Notes)

½ cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. raspberry liqueur (optional)

1 pint heavy whipping cream

1. In a medium bowl, mash with a fork 12 oz. raspberries (about 3 cups), 2 tbsp. sugar, and the liqueur, if using. Set aside.

2. In a large bowl, whip cream with remaining sugar using a mixer or whisk until firm peaks form. With a spatula, fold in



Raspberry fool

DID YOU KNOW? *The difference between a raspberry and a blackberry: All types of raspberries have hollow centers, whereas the core of a blackberry is solid; it stays in when the berry is picked.*

raspberry-liqueur mixture. Divide fool among 8 glasses or bowls and top with remaining fresh raspberries. Serve immediately or cover and chill for up to 2 hours.

PER ¾-CUP SERVING 297 CAL., 67% (198 CAL.) FROM FAT; 1.8 G PROTEIN; 22 G FAT (14 G SAT.); 25 G CARBO (3 G FIBER); 23 MG SODIUM; 82 MG CHOL.

Spiced blueberry pie

Black pepper, nutmeg, and cloves play up the underlying spicy note of blueberries in this pie. Serve with whipped cream if you like.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 3 hours

MAKES 8 servings

2¾ cups flour, plus more for rolling

¼ to ½ cup plus 1 tbsp. granulated sugar

2½ tsp. salt

8 tbsp. very cold butter, cut into small pieces

7 tbsp. very cold solid shortening, cut into pieces

¼ cup packed light brown sugar

1 tbsp. quick-cooking tapioca

1 tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

¼ tsp. ground cloves

2 pints fresh or frozen blueberries (4 cups)

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1. Mix 2½ cups flour, 1 tbsp. sugar, and 1½ tsp. salt in a large bowl. Drop in 7 tbsp. butter and the shortening. Using your hands, a fork, a pastry blender, or two knives, work butter and shortening into

the flour mixture until it resembles cornmeal with some pea-size pieces.

2. Using a fork, quickly stir in ½ cup very cold water. Turn chunks of dough and crumbs onto a clean surface. Knead just until dough starts to hold together, 5 to 10 times. Divide dough in half and pat each half into a 6-in. disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill 15 minutes or up to overnight.

3. Put an oven rack on the lowest rung. Preheat oven to 375°. Unwrap one disk of dough and put on a floured surface. Roll into a 12-in. circle (about ⅛-in. thick), turning 90° after each pass of the rolling pin to keep it from sticking. Transfer to a 9-in. pie pan, letting the dough fall into place (if you push or stretch it into place, it will shrink back when baked). Trim dough edges to ¼ in. past rim of pie pan. Cover with plastic wrap and chill 15 minutes. Meanwhile, roll out second disk into an 11-in. circle. Cut into ten 1-in.-wide strips. Transfer to a baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap, and chill 15 minutes.

4. While crusts chill, mix remaining flour, ¼ cup granulated sugar, the brown sugar, tapioca, remaining salt, the cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg, and cloves in a bowl. Add blueberries and lemon juice; toss. Taste and add more granulated sugar (up to ¼ cup), if you like. Pour berry mixture into crust and dot with remaining butter.

5. To weave a lattice crust, lay 5 strips of pie dough vertically across pie, spacing evenly. Take the top of every other strip and fold it back halfway. Lay a strip horizontally across center of pie, next to folds of vertical strips. Unfold vertical strips back over horizontal strip. Fold back vertical strips that were left flat last time, and repeat with a second horizontal strip, placing it above first strip (away from you). Repeat with a third horizontal strip above second. Repeat this process on lower half of pie, using remaining 2 strips of dough.

6. Fold bottom crust edge up over top crust and crimp edges together. Bake until crust is browned and filling is bubbling in the center, 60 to 75 minutes. Cover edge with strips of foil if browning too quickly. Let cool until bottom of pie pan is room temperature.

PER SERVING 473 CAL., 46% (216 CAL.) FROM FAT; 5.1 G PROTEIN; 24 G FAT (10 G SAT.); 62 G CARBO (2.9 G FIBER); 859 MG SODIUM; 31 MG CHOL. ■



Blueberry sorbet

Your freezer is the key to year-round berry pies: Just freeze fresh berries on a baking sheet, then seal them in a plastic bag