



Crashing the Holiday Cranberry Barrier MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:02] November 1620, the Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock. An Agriculture Department history expert Anne Efland says with a lot of agricultural help from the locals, the new settlers manage to survive the winter and plant crops the next spring.

Anne Efland [00:00:17] And by 1621, they had a harvest to celebrate, but only because of the nearby Indians, the Wampanoags.

Gary Crawford [00:00:27] And so the pilgrims and the Native Americans hold a what else, Thanksgiving feast in celebration. Evelyn says there's no direct reference to having turkey there, but the Native Americans did have a special high energy food called Pemmican. The other food usually was cranberries. So, cranberries were probably part of this first Thanksgiving meal. And we'll find out all about cranberries. Probably more than he ever wanted to know on this edition of Agriculture USA. I'm Gary Crawford. And now, a musical introduction to our special subject for today

Singing Voiceover [00:00:59] Craaaaannnnnnbbbbbbberries. Woah my cranberries.

Alison Carr [00:01:05] I love grabbing a handful and just eating them. They are tart, but I love the taste.

Gary Crawford [00:01:09] That's Alison Carr. She better like him. She's a sixth-generation cranberry farmer from Massachusetts. But we are talking with her here in Washington, D.C. at the Agriculture Department's farmers market and uh, hear that? I'm squishing my hand around in a flooded cranberry bog that Allison has brought all the way here from her farm in Massachusetts. She has even the live cranberry vines here, and she's got the harvested berries floating in this mini cranberry bog. Now, most of us have seen those commercials.

Male Voiceover [00:01:39] Hi. We're cranberry growers...

Gary Crawford [00:01:41] With the guys, you know, standing in this flooded field or bog with the berries floating around. Alison, is that really how it is and why all that water?

Alison Carr [00:01:50] The cranberry has four little pockets of air inside the berry that allows the berry to float. It's also how we can use water as a tool to harvest the cranberry in the fall.

Gary Crawford [00:02:00] How, how how does that work exactly?

Alison Carr [00:02:02] When you flood the bog with water before you harvest, the berries will start to float to the surface. You use a picking machine and it gently shakes the vines, knocks off the cranberries, and then the cranberries naturally will float to the surface.

Gary Crawford [00:02:17] And then they have these long plastic or wood so-called booms to round up the floating berries, pull them over to one end of the bog.

Alison Carr [00:02:26] Where they are taken off the bog into the back of a truck and cleaned and washed.

Gary Crawford [00:02:31] OK. Thank you, Alison. Now we're going to over here and talk to Karen Cahill with the Cranberry Marketing Committee. And Karen, it seems that growers like Alison are doing a super job of producing the cranberries. You told me earlier, though, that is sort of a challenge for folks like you, right?

Karen Cahill [00:02:47] The trends for production are growing. Demand is not growing quite at the rate that we would like it to be.

Gary Crawford [00:02:54] But you're working on that very hard.

Karen Cahill [00:02:56] Heck Yeah.

Gary Crawford [00:02:57] Of course, a lot of people only connect with cranberries once or twice a year during the holidays.

Gary Crawford [00:03:01] Now, is this holiday connection a blessing or a curse?

Karen Cahill [00:03:05] It's a big deal and we don't mind that by any means. We, of course, want to push the year-round versatility, but we also want people to look at cranberries in a different way around the holidays.

Gary Crawford [00:03:14] So what have you got in mind for that?

Karen Cahill [00:03:15] You can use them for decoration. You can use make a floating candle, display, make a flower arrangement with fresh cranberries. There're different things that you can do other than cranberry sauce, which you should also do because cranberry sauce is delicious. But there are other applications.

Gary Crawford [00:03:31] Ah in fact, now you're making up something here and serving samples of some kind of edible item. What is that?

Karen Cahill [00:03:37] Fresh ah Salsa today. Which is definitely a different flavor profile than I think some people are used to.

Gary Crawford [00:03:43] So what goes into that?

Karen Cahill [00:03:44] So first you're going to do some limes and add a little bit of sugar and salt and pepper and kind of set that aside. And then you're going to throw into a food processor a bag of cranberries, some cilantro, and some green onions. And you're just going to pulse that, and you combine that with the lime, sugar, salt combo we did before and boom, you've got yourself cranberry salsa.

Gary Crawford [00:04:05] Boom. Speaking of different like other berries, do they make, shall we say, more fortified holiday libations with cranberries?

Karen Cahill [00:04:13] Oh, there are tons of cocktail applications for sure. Sex and the City put cranberries on the map with the Cosmo for sure, but there's tons of things. The cranberry mule is very popular right now. Cranberry and ginger beer, cranberry dark and stormy, and cranberry margaritas.

Gary Crawford [00:04:29] You sound like you've had some personal experience with those.

Karen Cahill [00:04:32] Not really. (laughs)

Gary Crawford [00:04:34] A little sly laugh there. So, we are out of time for the complete detailed recipe for the cranberry salsa and other cranberry ideas go online to U.S.

Singing Voiceover [00:04:43] Crannnnnnnnbbbbbeeerrriies

Gary Crawford [00:04:47] Cranberries.com UScranberries.com. This has been.

Singing Voiceover [00:04:51] Crannnnnnnnnnbbbbbeeeeerrriies

Gary Crawford [00:04:51] OK, one more time. Agriculture USA, I'm Gary Crawford reporting for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington.