

FRESH, SAUCE OR DRIED: COMPARING LABELS

Grades 3-5 | 1 Class Period



OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will examine how to read an ingredient and nutrition label and use that information to make informed decisions and evaluate factors that go into making food purchase and consumption choices.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are some similarities and differences between fresh, dried, and processed cranberries?
- What are some reasons that you might choose one over the other?

MA STATE FRAMEWORKS

Nutrition and Balanced Eating [3.1.NE]

1. Identify principles of balanced eating (i.e., moderation, eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, consuming nutrient-rich foods, limiting processed foods and foods high in added sugar, drinking water, limiting sugary beverages) when making nutrition-related decisions.

Identify circumstances (e.g., budget, food access and availability, time management) that help or hinder decisions about nutrition and determine when assistance is needed in order to make a health-promoting decision.

6. Explain a variety of factors that can influence decisions about nutrition (e.g., food during celebrations, food preferences, media advertising, celebrity endorsements and product placement).

7. List options, predict potential outcomes of decision options, make a health-promoting choice, and analyze the outcome of decisions in common nutrition situations.

MATERIALS

- Worksheet with images of labels and guided questions
- Bag of fresh cranberries, can of cranberry sauce, bag of dried sweetened cranberries

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PROCEDURE

Warm Up

Open a bag of fresh cranberries and give each student a cranberry or pass a few around. Ask students what comes to mind when they think of cranberries and create a class list. If they need prompting, suggest some ideas to get them started, such as holidays, dried in trail mix or a family recipe. There may be students who have never seen or held a fresh cranberry. Tell students that because cranberries are very sour they are not often eaten raw. When they are made into juice, a sauce, or dried, a sweetener is usually added.

Once you have made the list, tell students that cranberries have many nutrients such as Vitamin C and antioxidants. Tell students that Vitamin C is an important nutrient that helps your body in several ways:

- It strengthens your immune system and helps your body fight off colds and other infections.
- It keeps your skin healthy by helping your body produce collagen which keeps your skin smooth and helps cuts heal faster.
- It protects your cells against damage, which can help you stay healthy longer.
- It helps your body absorb iron from foods like beans and spinach, and iron is important for energy and strength.
- It helps keep your bones and teeth strong.

Ask students to look closely at the cranberry and feel it. What do they notice? Prompt them to see that the cranberry feels soft and hollow. Ask students if they know how to tell if a cranberry is fresh. Once students have discussed this, cut a few cranberries open and pass them around. Students will see that every cranberry contains four air pockets which make raw cranberries bounce when they are dropped on a hard surface – this is a good indicator of whether they are fresh. This is also why they float when cranberry farmers flood the bogs.

Activity

Show students the label from a bag of fresh cranberries, a can of cranberry sauce and a bag of dried sweetened cranberries. As a class, make a Venn diagram. What are the similarities and differences between them? What do they all share in common? After the diagram is complete, discuss their findings.

Ask students why they might choose one form of cranberries over the other.

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EXTENSIONS & VARIATIONS

If time allows, the lesson can end with a comparison between canned cranberry sauce and homemade sauce. Cranberry sauce is easy to make, contains no corn syrup and the level of sweetness can be controlled by the chef.

How to make cranberry sauce with fresh cranberries:

INGREDIENTS

- 1 orange, medium size
- Water (amount varies)
- 1 cup granulated sugar (vary to taste)
- 12 ounces fresh cranberries; rinsed, inspected, and drained
- Pinch of salt (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the Orange: Remove any produce stickers from the orange and wash and dry it. Use a zester to extract as much orange zest as you can and set it aside for later.

Juice the Orange: Cut the orange in half and squeeze the juice into a 1-cup measuring cup. If the juice doesn't fill the cup, add water to make 1 cup of liquid.

Cook the Cranberry Sauce: Pour the orange juice and water mixture into a medium saucepan. Add the sugar and stir to combine. Add the cranberries to the saucepan and bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries begin to burst open—this should take about 10 minutes. If you prefer fewer whole cranberries, gently mash them with the back of a spoon while they cook.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in the pinch of salt (if using) and most of the orange zest, reserving a little for sprinkling on top.

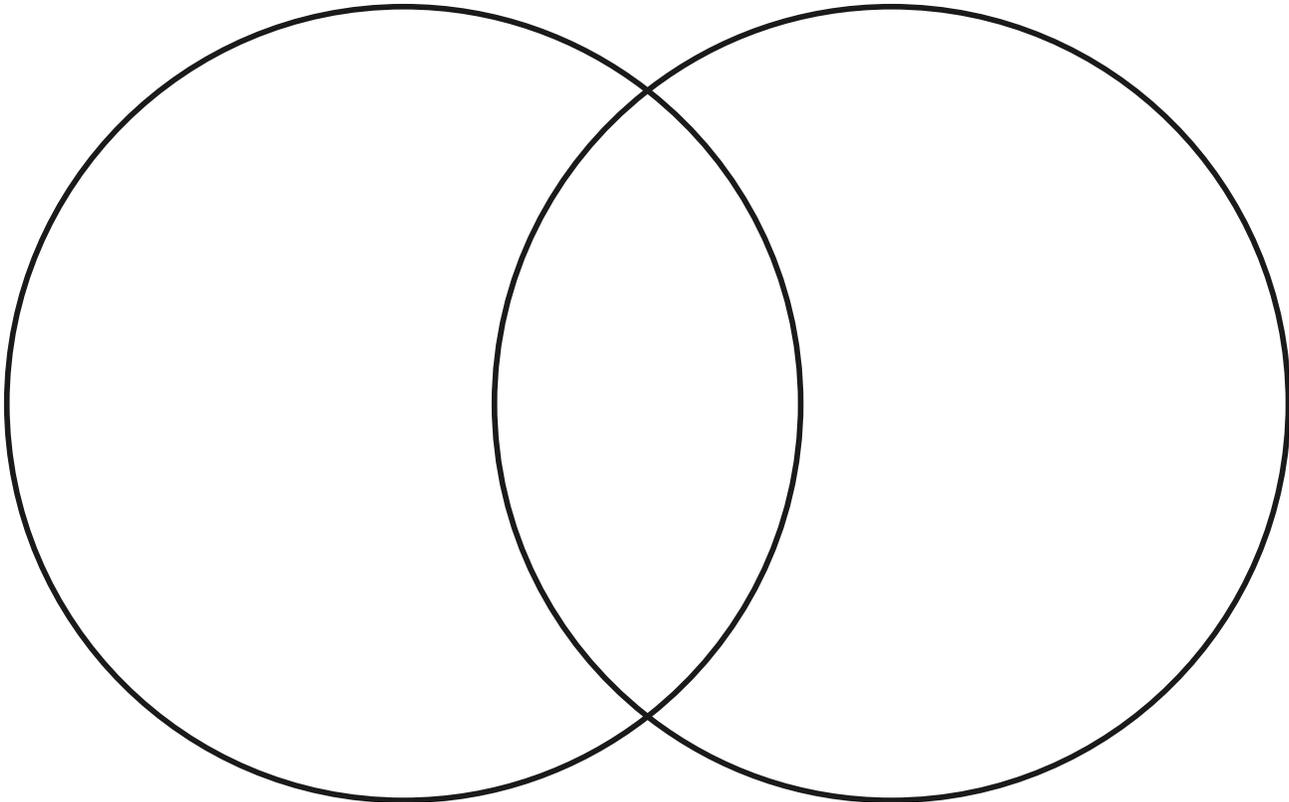
Pour the cranberry sauce into a bowl or small serving dish and sprinkle the remaining orange zest on top. Cover and let the sauce cool at room temperature, then refrigerate until ready to serve.

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HANDOUT

VENN DIAGRAM



Fresh, Sauce or Dried: Comparing Labels

HANDOUT

CRANBERRY NUTRITION LABELS



CRANBERRY SAUCE



DRIED CRANBERRIES



FRESH CRANBERRIES

