



BERRY NICE



This is the time of year to grab some fresh **cranberries** before they disappear until next fall. Odds are, you don't think about proanthocyanidins when you see them.

Those are the phytochemicals in cranberries that seem to keep bacteria from sticking to the surfaces of bladder cells. They may explain why studies

find a lower risk of recurrent urinary tract infections in women who consume a cranberry juice drink every day.

But that's not the only reason to toss a couple of bags of cranberries into your cart. Cranberries offer a rich red tartness—and a nice dose of vitamin C—to many a dish.

For a deliciously sweet-tart topping for buckwheat pancakes or oatmeal, simmer fresh cranberries for 10 to 15 minutes in orange juice and a little maple syrup. Or make a chutney by simmering fresh cranberries in water with mango, dried peaches, red onion, fresh minced ginger, and sugar to taste for 20 to 25 minutes. It's perfect with roasted chicken or spicy sautéed fish.

Then there's compote: Simmer fresh cranberries with raisins, prunes, and dried figs, pears, and apples for 20 to 25 minutes in apple cider with a stick of cinnamon and honey to taste. Mix with plain yogurt or eat as is.

Some tips for cranberry picking: Ripe cranberries should be shiny and plump. If you store them in a tightly-sealed plastic bag, they'll last for up to two months in the fridge or a year in the freezer. Just don't let frozen berries thaw before cooking or they'll end up soft and mushy.

Cranberries may not be sweet, but they have character to spare.

STROMBELLY

"At **Vanellis**, our priority is to offer our customers the freshest and healthiest ingredients," says the chain's Web site.

So *that's* it. The Italian eatery, found in dozens of malls and food courts nationwide, sells **Pepperoni Stromboli** because it's jam-packed with fresh, healthy ingredients. Would that be the white flour in the dough? Or the cheese and pepperoni that kick in nearly a day's worth of saturated fat (17 grams)? Or all those "healthiest" ingredients together, which supply more than a day's worth of sodium (2,200 milligrams)?

A stromboli is essentially a slice of pizza with dough both above and below the toppings. That may explain why the Pepperoni (or the **Meatball**) has twice as many calories (roughly 900) as a slice of Vanellis' Pepperoni Pizza (440). And the Pepperoni Stromboli isn't even the most fattening kind. The **Veal Stromboli** has a cool 1,000 calories, and the **Roasted Vegetable** has 1,010.

A stromboli out-calories just about every other item on Vanellis' menu. The pizzas (400+ calories a slice), the calzones, the lasagna, the veal cutlet (500-700 calories each)—none would qualify

as healthy, but next to a stromboli, they look positively svelte.

Even if a stromboli is your dinner rather than a snack, it's a belly builder. Each one has about as much white flour as five slices of white bread. You'd have to walk briskly (no strolling!) through the mall for 3 hours and 45 minutes to burn off all those calories.

Not up for that? Just hop into the department store. Maybe the next size up is on sale.



dish OF THE MONTH

Quick Spinach Salad

Mix 1 Tbs. of raspberry vinaigrette dressing with 1 Tbs. of fresh lemon juice and 1 tsp. of olive oil. Toss with a small bag of baby spinach and top with a handful of cut-up fruit (try red grapes and strawberries) and 1 or 2 Tbs. of nuts (try toasted sliced almonds).

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Nutrition Action Healthletter

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