**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.

**Oh No’s**

“A simple but delicious baked dessert served warm with vanilla ice cream and topped with a memorable salty and sweet caramel sauce.” That’s how Uno’s menu describes its **Bread Pudding with a Salty Caramel Sauce**.

Memorable, indeed. Your fat cells won’t soon forget the 900 calories’ worth of bread pudding (cream, white flour, eggs, sugar, etc.), ice cream (milk, cream, sugar, corn syrup, natural and artificial vanilla flavor, etc.), and caramel sauce (sugar, cream, water, butter, and salt). Uno’s Web site lists the calories as 450, hoping that few people will notice the “Servings 2.” That’s your only clue that the Nutrition Facts apply to just half the dessert. How clever! (If you live in an area where restaurants are required to divulge calories on the menu, you’ll see the full 900 listed.)

And they aren’t just any old calories. Nearly 500 of them come from fat, largely supplied by all that cream. There’s enough to deliver 32 grams of saturated fat—1½ days’ worth. Nothing like a little pudding putty to coat those artery walls, which won’t forget this baby, either.

Speaking of blood vessels, it’s not often that you find 660 milligrams of sodium in a dessert. But between the bread and the salty caramel sauce, Uno’s gives your blood pressure a lift. Then there’s the 10+ teaspoons of sugar that come with zero nutrients.

Bread pudding has been around for years, though not with ice cream and caramel sauce. Uno adds ice cream and sauces to nearly all of its desserts. That’s what makes them stick around your midsection for years.

**Uno Foods:** (866) 600-8667

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**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).