



Taken from: www.nutrition-and-you.com/black-currants.html

Black currants are one of very popular, summer season berries. Indeed, they are incredibly rich in several valuable health benefiting phyto-nutrients, and anti-oxidants that are vital for our health.

Black currant is a small shrub belonging to the family of *Grossulariaceae*, in the genus; *Ribes*. Its scientific name: *Ribes nigrum*. Currants are native to central and northern Europe and Siberia. The currant (*Ribes*) plant is a fast growing, deciduous, small shrub reaching about 5-6 ft. in height. In general, currants grow best in the regions where summers are humid but winters severe and chilling. During the season, *Ribes nigrum* bears pendulous chain of small berries. Each currant berry has a size of about 1 cm in diameter, very dark purple, almost black with a glossy skin, and a persistent calyx at its apex. It can carry about 3-10 tiny, edible seeds.

Currants can come in different colors. Berries of red, white and pink currants feature translucent pulp, sweeter in taste. They, however, considered inferior to black currants in terms of antioxidant power.

Health Benefits

- Black currants carry significantly high amounts of phenolic flavonoid phytochemicals called **anthocyanins**. Scientific studies suggest that consumption of blackcurrants can have potential health effects against cancer, aging, inflammation, and neurological diseases.
- Black currants have anti-oxidant value (Oxygen radical absorbance capacity- ORAC) of 7950 Trolox Equivalents per 100g, which is one of the highest value for fruits after chokeberries, elderberry, and cranberries. Red currants, however, possess comparatively less ORAC value of 3387 TE.



Healthy Foods

Health Benefits: Currants

- They are an excellent sources of antioxidant vitamin, vitamin-C. 100 g of fresh currants provide more than 300% of daily-recommended intake values of vitamin C. Research studies have shown that consumption of fruits rich in vitamin C helps the human body develop immunity against infectious agents and also help scavenge harmful oxygen-free radicals from the body.
- Black currants carry small but significant amount of vitamin A, and flavonoid anti-oxidants such as *beta-carotene*, *zea-xanthin* and *cryptoxanthin* levels. 100 g fresh berries provide 230 IU of vitamin A. These compounds are known to have antioxidant properties. Vitamin A is also required for maintaining integrity of mucosa and skin, and essential for healthy vision. Furthermore, consumption of natural fruits rich in flavonoid anti-oxidants helps to protect from lung and oral cavity cancers.
- Fresh blackcurrants are also rich in many essential vitamins such as pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), pyridoxine (vitamin B-6) and thiamin (vitamin B-1). These vitamins are essential in the sense that human body requires them from external sources to replenish and required for metabolism.
- They also carry good amounts of mineral **iron**. 100 g currant berries provide about 20% of daily recommended levels. Iron is an important co-factor for cytochrome oxidase guided cellular metabolism and red blood cell (RBC) production in the bone marrow.
- Additionally, the berries are also a very good source of other important minerals like copper, calcium, phosphorus, manganese, magnesium, and potassium, which are very essential for body metabolism.