

Before Columbus discovered America, Indians living on Cape Cod were gathering wild cranberries for food, for use as dyes, and for medicinal purposes. When the English arrived at Plymouth, friendly Indians showed the newcomers how to eat the tangy fruit they called "Sassamanesh." Pilgrim women were quick to adapt familiar recipes for tarts, sauces and nogs to the zesty cranberry.

Not until almost two hundred years later, in 1816, did a Dennis man, Henry Hall, notice that cranberries growing where sand from the dunes blew over the vines were juicier and larger than elsewhere. He began cultivating those vines with the best fruit and sanding the boggy areas where they grew best. Commercially-grown cranberries soon became an important industry in Cape Cod's economy.

Historical background of the fruit meant little to Aunt Olivia; she was most concerned with how best to use cranberries to help feed six or more hungry people who gathered at her table three times a day.

Cranberry-harvest season at Aunt Olivia's meant Uncle Henry would be bringing home a wooden box full of shiny tart red fruit and, if I were around, I'd be put to work picking them over. Firm, ripe, unblemished berries were separated from whatever else was in the box, including squishy cranberries and any bits of vine, twigs and leaves. Little fingers soon learned the difference between good sound berries and those to be discarded.

Once cleaned of debris, the berries were rinsed in clear water, drained, and heaped into a galvanized tin quart measure before being poured into a big saucepan. If we had about three quarts of berries, Aunt Olivia combined six cups of water and six cups of sugar with the fruit, and set the pan over high heat to boil for eight or ten minutes until the skins popped. To avoid clouding the sauce, she let it cool before stirring it and before skimming off any foam that remained on top. Then she spooned the gleaming cranberry sauce into pint jars. The sauce was served as a relish to accompany chicken or turkey, of course, and was also the basic ingredient in half-a-dozen or more other dishes.

To make a small quantity of **Cranberry Sauce**, maintain the same proportions Aunt Olivia used: one cup sugar and one

cup water to two cups (or one pound) of cranberries. Boil together, let cool, jar.

In today's column, cranberry sauce is used in each recipe; the results demonstrate how versatile a food can be, even one with as strong and individual a flavor as the cranberry.

Sometimes at breakfast time on Sunday Aunt Olivia, always an early riser, would have time to make **Cranberry Muffins** and serve them hot from the oven.

1/4 cup shortening	5 tsp baking powder
1/4 cup sugar	1 tsp salt
2 well-beaten eggs	2/3 cup milk
2 cups sifted flour	1 cup cranberry sauce

Cream shortening and sugar together and stir in the eggs. Sift dry ingredients together and add, alternately with milk, to shortening-sugar-egg mixture. Stir thoroughly. Grease a 12-muffin tin, and fill each section one-third full. Put a teaspoonful of cranberry sauce in the center of the batter; then fill tins until two-thirds full. Bake in hot oven (400°) for about 25 to 30 minutes. Six eager people get two hot muffins apiece.

Sunday night supper at Aunt Olivia's house often consisted of waffles or pancakes. Although sometimes maple syrup was poured over flapjacks, on occasion **Hot Cranberry Butter Sauce** left none of the Lovells disappointed. Combine one cup of cranberry sauce with 1/4 cup each of butter and dark brown sugar, and heat to boiling. Serve in a pitcher.

Desserts made with cranberries find favor among the Lovells, too. We are all fond of **Cranberry Crunch** served with vanilla ice cream.

1 cup uncooked rolled oats	1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup flour	1/2 cup butter or oleo
1 cup cranberry sauce	

Melt butter and pour over a mixture of oats, flour and brown sugar. Stir well. Grease an 8"x8"x2" baking pan and spread half the mixture evenly over the bottom. Cover with cranberry sauce and spread the rest of the mixture on top

Bake 45 minutes at 350°. Cut in squares and serve hot with ice cream.

A refreshing finale to a big dinner, an ideal choice for a warm Indian Summer day, and a dessert that may be made ahead, packed into a refrigerator ray, and chilled until serving time, is called **Velvet Cranberry Pudding**.

1/4 lb. marshmallows	2 tbsp lemon juice
1 cup crushed pineapple	1/8 tsp salt
1 cup cranberry sauce	1 cup heavy cream, whipped

With scissors, cut each marshmallow into eight small pieces. Combine all ingredients except heavy cream. Whip cream. Fold into fruit. If the cookie jar is full, pass a plateful of cookies when you serve this pudding.

Cranberries even lend themselves to salads. Molded gelatin salad does not usually meet with unbridled enthusiasm at Aunt Olivia's table, but under the Lovell roof, there has always been a House Rule that reads: "Eat what's set before you with no complaints." One molded gelatin salad, however, is a favorite with everyone in the family. There being no house rule against praising the food, Aunt Olivia knows that serving **Cranberry Spike Salad**, especially with baked or broiled fish, will bring rave reviews.

1 env. unflavored gelatin	1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup cold water	1 tsp lemon rind, grated
1 cup cranberry sauce	1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp horseradish	pinch cayenne
3/4 tsp dry mustard	3/4 cup lg curd cottage cheese

Empty one envelope of gelatin in a custard cup and add

cold water; let stand two minutes. Place custard cup in pan of boiling water until gelatin dissolves. Combine cranberry sauce and gelatin, and stir in all the other ingredients. Beat just to blend. Spoon mixture into individual molds or into a ring mold, rinsed with cold water. Chill until firm. Serve, unmolded, on leaf lettuce. The combination of flavors is especially appreciated with striped bass, bluefish or swordfish steaks.

Aunt Olivia's cranberry sauce never varied from the time I can first remember: the idea of changing the recipe seems heretical. Yet all fine cooks know that an imaginative culinary artist may come up with an improved version of almost any good recipe. That's how I view the following rule for **Ginger Cranberry Sauce**, given me by Miss Eileen Murphy of Osterville.

4 cups fresh cranberries	2 cups sugar
1 cup water	dash of salt
1/3 cup crystallized ginger, diced	

Boil cranberries, water, salt and sugar together in a covered saucepan six to eight minutes until berries' skins burst. Watch to see they do not boil over. Remove from heat and drop the sliced ginger into the hot sauce. Allow to cool, pour into pint jars. Chill in refrigerator. Sauce can be frozen.

If Christopher Columbus had only had a jar of Ginger Cranberry Sauce to bring home to Queen Isabella of Spain, he might have been even more richly rewarded for his discoveries than history records. Cranberry sauce complements chicken and turkey; ginger cranberry sauce does more... indefinably and delicately... Try it at Thanksgiving Dinner. Everyone will be glad.