

# THE MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND FOLKTALES SURROUND THE BLUEBERRIES

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## ABSTRACT

*Blueberry is a high-value crop globally. Both wild and cultivated blueberries are commercially available to consumers. Blueberries are plump, sweet, and juicy fruit. They are a widely distributed and widespread group of perennial flowering plants. They are small, round, sweet, and often tangy berries that grow on shrubs belonging to the genus Vaccinium. Although mostly consumed as fresh or frozen blueberries, they are typically blue to purple-black and native to North America. Blueberries are known for their antioxidant properties and are a rich source of vitamins C and K and dietary Fiber. This article will teach us about the Myths, legends, and folktales surrounding the Blueberries. We will delve into the history of Blueberries as a global delicacy, its magical properties, the science behind the flavour of blueberries as well as the various health benefits of Blueberries. When it comes to eating or making RTS (Ready-to-serve) beverages of blueberries, then ripe, plump blueberries should be chosen, ensuring they are free from any signs of spoilage or damage. Washing and sorting the berries is essential to removing dirt or debris, ensuring a clean and safe final product.*

**Keywords:** Nutritional properties, Myths, Folktales, Health benefits

## INTRODUCTION

The scientific name of blueberry is *Vaccinium spp.* blueberries belong to the genus *Vaccinium* and are a part of the Ericaceae family. They are high-value crops globally which also include cranberry, huckleberry, bilberries, and lingonberries. The most common species of blueberry is *Vaccinium corymbosum*. They are categorized by their deep blue-purple colour and sweet and tart flavour.



They are often enjoyed fresh but they can also be used in various culinary applications, such as baking, making jams, and sauces, and being added to cereals or smoothies. However, some other species of blueberry are also present i.e. *vaccinium angustifolium* (lowbush blueberry), *Vaccinium myrtillus*(bilberry).

## HISTORY OF BLUEBERRIES

The history of blueberries stretches back a thousand years ago, the indigenous peoples in *North America* were the first to cultivate and consume them. Native American tribes, particularly those in the Northeastern United States and eastern Canada, valued blueberries as a staple food source and used them fresh and dried for various culinary purposes. They are also the first to recognize blueberries' versatility and health

benefits, using them for medicinal purposes and as natural flavouring. Native Americans taught settlers various techniques for preserving blueberries, including drying them in the sun and using them in pemmican (a traditional food made from dried meat, fat, and berries). The commercial cultivation of blueberries began in the early 20th century. The development of the cultivated blueberry industry was primarily spearheaded by *Elizabeth White*, a farmer's daughter from New Jersey, and *Frederick Coville*, a botanist from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) leading to the creation of the first cultivated blueberry varieties.

### **THE FOLKLORE AND MYTHS THAT SURROUND THE BLUEBERRIES**

Blueberries are a fruit that has held an important place in folklore and the various myths that surround the blueberry. *Here are some examples:*

***Native American folklore:*** According to some Native American cultures, blueberries are sacred fruits given to humans as gifts from the Great Spirit. Some tribes believe that blueberries have healing powers and can be used to treat various ailments, including stomach-aches, fever, and diarrhea.

***Finnish folklore:*** In Finland, the blueberry is seen as a symbol of the long, dark winters and the bright, short summers. The berries are said to be able to protect people from evil spirits and are traditionally used in a ritual called "Pikku-ukko" in which people place blueberries around their homes to ward off evil.

***Russian folklore:*** In Russian folklore, blueberries are believed to have magical

qualities and were used by witches to make potions and spells. Some people also believed that blueberries could help them find true love. However, there are several myths are there related to blueberries they are;

***Blueberries are native only to North America:*** While it's true that several species of blueberries are native to North America, particularly the *Vaccinium* genus, which includes *Vaccinium corymbosum* (highbush blueberry) and *Vaccinium angustifolium* (lowbush blueberry), but there are also blueberry species native to other parts of the world, such as Europe and Asia.

***Blueberries can cure or prevent all illnesses:*** Blueberries are rich in antioxidants and nutrients that offer various health benefits, such as supporting heart health and reducing inflammation. However, they are not a cure-all for every ailment.

***Frozen blueberries are less nutritious than fresh:*** While fresh blueberries are delicious in season, frozen blueberries are often just as nutritious. In fact, Frozen blueberries can help preserve their nutrients, making them a convenient and healthy option year-round.

***Blueberries Will Ripen After Picking Them:***

Unfortunately, blueberries aren't like bananas or avocados, which will ripen and soften right on your kitchen counter. Their ripening process stops once they're removed from the plant.

***Blueberries Like Wet Soil:*** Because blueberry shrubs naturally grow in bogs and damp forests, some gardeners believe their soil should be kept moist or wet. But they love well-drained rather than clay soil that will keep their roots wet for too long.

## BLUEBERRY AS A GLOBAL DELICACY

This little, indigo-coloured fruit has charmed taste buds worldwide, making its way into various culinary pleasures and serving as a symbol of freshness and Vigor. Blueberries are now more widely available than ever thanks to agricultural technology advances and global trading networks. blueberries were once limited to select places with favorable climate and soil conditions, but they are now grown on every continent except Antarctica. This global production assures a year-round supply of blueberries for people worldwide, increasing their popularity and consumption.

## MAGICAL PROPERTIES OF BLUEBERRIES

*Blueberries are magical, but maybe not in the way you may think. they don't have the classical "magical" features that are seen in fantasy and literature, but they do have some amazing attributes.*

- 1. Protection:** The protective properties of blueberries make them suitable for spells, charms, and other spiritual practices.
- 2. Wisdom:** The best fruit to choose is blueberries. It has the special spiritual capacity to make you wiser.
- 3. Prosperity:** Blueberries have historically been linked to prosperity and wealth.
- 4. Dream Enhancement:** This fruit's magical qualities are also excellent for enhancing your ideal existence. Blueberries should be consumed every night, right before bed.
- 5. Aura Cleansing:** Blueberries are known as aura cleansers. Before you start your day, purify yourself by consuming 2 blueberries. It restores

your energy levels, balances your chakras, and keeps you in good shape to attract good luck, creativity, and inner strength.

## BLUEBERRIES AS THE NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE

Blueberries are not only delicious but also packed with nutritional benefits. Here's what we need to know:

### 1. Vitamins and Minerals

- a) Vitamin C:** Blueberries are a great source of vitamin C, which supports skin health and immune function.
- b) Vitamin K1:** This nutrient is essential for blood clotting and may also benefit bone health.
- c) Manganese:** Helps with the metabolism of amino acids, lipids, proteins, and carbohydrates.

### 2. Fiber

Blueberries are high in dietary Fiber, which is important for digestive health and disease prevention.

### 3. Low in Calories

A cup of blueberries provides these recommended daily intakes:

*Vitamin C:* 24%

*Vitamin K:* 36%

*Manganese:* 25%

*Dietary Fiber:* 14%

- Beyond this Blueberries are also low in calories.

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE COLOUR OF BLUEBERRIES

A remarkable phenomenon about blueberries is their vivid blue colour. Although blueberries have a lot of anthocyanins These pigments are part of the flavonoid group and mix well with water. Anthocyanin creates the red, purple, and blue colours we see in plants like fruits, veggies, flowers, and leaves., there is a skin

pigment that should give them a dark red colour, mainly the wax coating that envelops the fruit gives them their true-blue colour. Because of the nanostructures in this waxy layer, blueberries look blue to the human eye when exposed to blue and ultraviolet light. Since they can see UV light, birds will probably think these tasty treats are blue-UV. Scientists are investigating methods to imitate this colour-forming layer for uses like producing blue hues in polymers or makeup.

### HEALTH BENEFITS OF BLUEBERRY

*There are various health benefits of blueberry are there, which are commonly listed below.*

- i **Antioxidant-rich**  
Blueberries contain antioxidants, specifically anthocyanins, which help the body oppose oxidative stress and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.
- ii **Heart Health**  
Regular blueberry eating has been connected to better heart health by lowering blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and the risk of heart disease.
- iii **Brain Function**  
Based on certain research, antioxidants found in blueberries could slow down brain aging, boost memory, and protect against cognitive decline.
- iv **Anti-inflammatory Properties**  
Anti-inflammatory chemicals found in blueberries may help reduce inflammation, possibly reducing the risk of inflammatory illnesses such as arthritis and cancer.

- v **Support Digestive Health**  
Blueberries contain fibre, which promotes regular bowel motions and feeds beneficial gut bacteria.
- vi **Eye Health**  
Blueberries are rich in antioxidants, including lutein and zeaxanthin, which may aid in protecting against age-related muscular degeneration and various eye conditions.
- vii **Blood Sugar Regulation**  
Owing to their low glycaemic index, blueberries can aid in regulating blood sugar levels, which makes them an excellent option for individuals with diabetes or those looking to manage their blood sugar.
- viii **Skin Health**  
The antioxidants in blueberries can help to shield the skin from UV radiation, pollution, and other external factors, contributing to healthy skin and possibly decelerating the aging process.
- ix **Weight Management**  
Blueberries are low in calories and fibre, making them a satisfying and nutritious snack option that may support weight management when included as a part of a balanced diet.
- x **Anti-cancerous property**  
Some research suggests that the antioxidants and other compounds found in blueberries may help to reduce the risk of certain types of cancer, although more studies are needed to confirm these effects.

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