

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Canada's Jam expands to the Saskatoon berry

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EMO, Ontario – There are many types of jam. In busier metropolitan areas, you might find yourself in a traffic jam or if you're in a sticky situation, you might find yourself in an emotional jam. You can jam a cork into a bottle or you can even eat jam. The eatable type of jam is what this article is about.

You probably have seen the jam in your outdoor or local grocery stores it's simply called Canada's. The Loney family, who owns the Canada's label, is located in Emo, Ontario. They have been selling their Canada's strawberry, raspberry and blueberry canned jam, in their family owned-grocery store-Cloverleaf Grocery, since November 2007 but it's hitting the U.S. market in a huge way.

In February '08 Canada's is expected to expand to Saskatoon berry, apricot, peach, black currant, and marmalade. Saskatoon berries are comparable in size and appearance to blueberries but with a dark purple or red colour. They are found primarily on Canada's Prairie Provinces and far north on trees. Up until a few years ago, these berries have been unavailable in the mainstream market. Saskatoon berries have been a common food in the diet of Native peoples, a key ingredient in Pemnican, as well as many other Native foods and medicines.

The Saskatoon berries are grown in shrubs or small trees which can grow from 1-4 meters tall, often spreading by stolons (horizontal stems which grow at the soil surface or below ground, they form new plants at the ends or at the nodes) to form colonies. It has pretty white flowers which appear in June. The bark is smooth and grey to brown in colour. The alternate leaves are simple, elliptic to obovate, (teardrop-shaped, stem attaches to tapering point) with serrate margins at the tips.

The berries are common in open woods at low elevations and/or along river banks. Natives made a large spruce bark tub of about 30 gallon capacity. Into the bottom of these tubs they placed about a peck of berries, and on top of the berries they placed red-hot stones, then more berries and more rocks until the tub was full. This combination was left for about six hours, until the berries were completely cooked. They were then crushed between the hands, spread upon

splinters of wood, tied together and placed on a slow fire. The juice running off from a collecting tube was rubbed over the body. After two or three days of drying, the berries were in good condition to last for several years. In this dried cake state, the berry is a good addition to soups, puddings or vegetables.

The Blackfoot people would drink Saskatoon berry juice for an upset stomach. It is also a mild laxative. The people also made eye drops from immature berries. If these were not available, they would use dried berries. The boiled juice was also used for eardrops. These people also made a purple dye of this plant, calling it O k o - n o k , whereas the Cree called the plant Saskatooniaktkik, and used the stems for arrows and pipe stems.

Other natives made eyewash from the green, inner bark of the Saskatoon stem. The Chipewewa people boiled the cambium as a disinfectant wash. They used the root bark of a related species, *A. canadensis*, as a women's tonic to stop excessive menstrual bleeding.

The Thompson people used Saskatoon berry bark in a decoction and drank it to help pass afterbirth, sometimes in addition to sitting in a sitz bath (warm water bath used for healing or cleansing purposes). An infusion of roots was drunk to prevent miscarriages.

The wood is quite hard and can be used to make various tools. Saskatoon berries played a major role in native ceremonies, especially in the Sun Dance which was held when the berries were ripe.

Saskatoon berries appear to be an excellent source of manganese, magnesium, iron, calcium, potassium, copper and carotene. A 100 gram serving of fresh berries will supply 88 mg of calcium or 11% of the recommended dietary allowance. The berries can be

considered a better source of calcium than red meats, vegetables and cereals. The berries are an excellent source of iron and yields 22.3% of the recommended dietary allowance in a 100 gram serving suggested that Saskatoon berries may be a natural source of iron for anemic persons. The berries supply 33.8% of the recommended dietary allowance of

we began looking for another factory who could produce jam in a can."

Wherever groceries, snacks or souvenirs are sold, you can bet Canada's jam will be there. The jam is sold in grocery stores, unique gift shops and even gas stations.

International Falls, Minnesota is a big supplier of Canada's jam. Jerry Selander, owner

the jam in the summer time." She also noticed that a lot of tourists purchase the jam and that she will continue to sell the jam (Canada's) in the future.

There are a lot of responsibilities when producing the jam. "We are responsible to abide by all the regulations which include registering our label in Canada. In the U.S. we must abide by the 9/11 regulations which includes FDA inspections," Loney added.

Located in Southey, Alberta, Last Mountain Berry Farms (LMBF) is a small family owned operation which has a staff of about 12 employees.

The 103-year old, 15-acre berry orchard farm is owned and operated by Barb and Barry Isaac. The Isaacs have been selling their products across Canada since 1991 and produces 4000 quarts of jams and spreads daily. That's the equivalent to 250,000 liters of fruit a year.

"Today we are into volume production that is sold coast to coast, but we never compromise on the quality of our product," proudly added Barb. LMBF buys Saskatoon berries from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta. Their advertising technique is word of mouth. Compared to the major producers of jams and spreads, LMBF products contain no chemicals, or added preservatives.

Currently, the product is cooked in huge open kettles. The jam is boiled down to intensify the flavour. They also produce an innovative product called "jam type spread." It involves very little boiling which helps preserve the fresh taste of the berries. The spread is less sweet and contains fewer calories.

The process of the jam is simple, making it truly a more natural jam.

Jam has a more intense flavor; the factory is in the process of installing a huge commercial roaster. This technology is much like the effect that elevation has on the boil-

ing point of water. The boiling time and temperate of the fruit is reduced, helping to keep the fresh taste. The integrity of the fruit is preserved.

We know that Canada's jam is made in a more natural process-but why are the jams contained in cans and not in bottles?

Loney explains, "Canadian jam has been produced in a can for over a hundred years. Most suppliers have switched to glass. There are several advantages to tins. Many of our customers are outdoor enthusiasts and therefore appreciate that tins do not break like glass does. Tin cans are easily compacted by crushing and are lighter than glass. This is especially important in reducing waste when garbage must be packed out from the camp site. Tins are hermetically sealed. No gases or rays, such as sun light can pass through a tin."

Besides being packaged in cans, the jam is unique in other ways. "Canada's is also higher in carbohydrates and thicker than our competitors. People (are) looking for a product that does not contain high fructose corn syrup."

You may not always find Canada's jam in grocery stores. In fact you might even find the canned jam in hardware stores. "Outdoor enthusiasts are definitely our biggest customers. In the United States, Canada's jam's niche market is in hardware or outdoor stores where it can be found close to the fishing section. Tourists like the fact that it is very different from their American versions. Canada's jams contain no high fructose corn syrup," informed Loney.

Besides hardware, outdoor, and grocery stores, Cloverleaf's website is www.canadas-food.com is another venue for purchasing these foods.

Other Canadian products they sell and are doing quite well with in the U.S. is Red River Cereal, Last Mountain Berry Farms Jam type spread, and Mackintosh's Toffee.

Thanks to the American system, Canada's jams can be offered in the states a lot quicker than in Canada.

"It took only a couple of weeks for approval in the United States. We find the Canadian system very slow, ineffective and inefficient as compared to the American system," said Loney.

If you're looking for something new, different or that simply stands out from the other jams, Canada's jam is truly A Taste of Canada.



Saskatoon berry jams will soon take a place on grocer's shelves next to Canada's other varieties. Saskatoon berries have been a common food in the diet of Native peoples, a key ingredient in Pemnican, as well as many other Native foods and medicines.

manganese and 7% of the recommended dietary allowance of copper.

Recent research indicates the berries have very high components of phenolics, flavonols and anthocyanins. The berries are high in sugar, rich in Vitamin C, and also contain more than three times as much iron and copper in the same weight as raisins.

"Just recently, this berry has entered the commercial market. Due to a new viable harvest method. Last Mountain Berry Farms (LMBF) is one of the pioneers in this endeavour, said Mark Loney, one of Cloverleaf's managers. It is quintessential Canadian berry as it grows primarily in Canada. We expect it to be one of our best sellers for both tourists, and people looking for something new, said Loney, adding that about 70% of what they sell is in Minnesota, 25 % to other U.S. States and currently around 5 % in Northwestern Ontario.

Malkin's, Canada's jam only canned jam competition, also produces a canned jam for many years. "When we heard the Malkin's plant was closing

of Fun Sisters Unique Gift Shops and Voyageur Gift Shop, has been selling Malkin's jam for 25 years but Canada's jam since it appeared on the markets last November. Selander said that he got the jam when the tourist season was just about over and that he's been trying to educate the people about Canada's jam.

"When the jam (Malkin's) was in the local grocery store I noticed everyone was running out of the jam the gift shops were the first to go (sold out). It's been a good product for us and we sold quite a bit over the years."

David Stewart, manager of Super One grocery store, said that Canada's jam has been selling as well as Malkin's.

"It depends on the season. In the summer, it's the most popular jam. It's (Malkin's) big with the tourists," said Stewart.

Terri Medecke, manager of Freedom Valu Centre, said they have been selling Malkin's jam for five years but Canada's for five months. Medecke couldn't say that customers come into her station strictly for the jam but did say that "we sell a lot of