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## Cherry fruit nutrition facts

Wonderfully delicious, cherry fruit is packed with full of health-benefiting nutrients and unique antioxidants. Cherries are native to Eastern Europe and Asia Minor regions.

Botanically, the fruit is a "drupe" (stone fruit), belonging to the broad *rosaceae* family of small tree fruits in the genus, *prunus*. Some of common "drupe" family fruits are [plums](#), [peaches](#), [apricots](#) etc. Although several species of cherries exist, two popular cultivars are **wild or sweet cherry** and **sour or tart cherry**. While wild or sweet cherry belongs to the species; *prunus avium*, tart cherry belongs to that of *prunus cerasus*.

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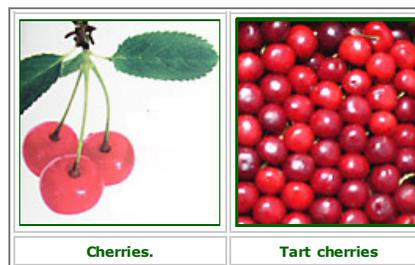
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Cherries.

Tart cherries

Cherries are drupe fruits with central "stony-hard" seed surrounded fleshy fruit measuring 2 cm in diameter. Externally the fruits have bright "shiny" red or purple color with very thin skin.

The West Indian cherry fruit known as **aserola** (*Malpighia emarginata*) is native to West Indian islands and grown in Mexico, Texas regions in North America. Acerola belongs to tropical fruit-bearing shrub or small tree in the family Malpighiaceae and contain 2-3 small seeds. Acerola contain exceptionally high levels of vitamin-C and vitamin-A than North American and European cherries.

## Health benefits of cherry fruit

- Cherries are one of the very low calorie fruits; yet are rich source of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals. Both sweet as well as tart Cherries are packed with numerous health benefiting compounds that are essential for wellbeing.
- Cherries are pigment rich fruits. These pigments are in fact polyphenolic flavonoid compounds known as **anthocyanin glycosides**. Anthocyanins are red, purple or blue pigments found in many fruits and vegetables, especially concentrated in their skin, known to have powerful anti-oxidant properties.
- Scientific studies have shown that anthocyanins in the cherries are found to act like anti-inflammatory agents by blocking the actions of cyclooxygenase-1 and 2 enzymes. Thus consumption of cherries has potential health effects against chronic painful episodes such as gout arthritis, fibromyalgia (painful muscle condition) and sports injuries.
- Research studies also suggest that tart cherries are help body to fight against cancers, aging and neurological diseases and pre-diabetes.
- Cherry fruits are very rich in stable anti-oxidant **melatonin**. Melatonin can cross the blood-brain barrier easily and produces soothing effects on the brain neurons, calming down nervous system irritability, which helps relieve neurosis, insomnia and headache conditions.
- They are also good source of minerals such as potassium, iron, zinc, copper and manganese. Potassium is a heart-healthy mineral; an important component of cell and body fluids that regulate heart rate and blood pressure.
- The fruits, especially tart cherries are exceptionally rich in many health promoting flavonoid poly phenolic **anti-oxidants** such as *lutein*, *zeaxanthin* and *beta carotene*. These compounds act as protective scavengers against harmful free radicals and reactive oxvaen species (ROS) that play a role

protective scavengers against harmful free radicals and reactive oxygen species (ROS) that play a role in aging, cancers and various disease processes.

- Anti-inflammatory property of cherries has been found effective in reducing heart disease risk factors by scavenging action against free radicals.
- **Acerola** or West Indian cherry has exceptionally very high levels of **vitamin-C** (1677.6 mg per 100 g or 2796 % of RDA) and vitamin-A (767 IU per 100 g).

See the table below for in depth analysis:

**Sweet and Tart Cherry fruits, fresh, raw,  
Nutritive Value per 100 g,**

Principle	Nutrient Value per 100g		Percentage of RDA	
	Sweet	Tart	Sweet	Tart
<b>Cherry type</b>				
Energy	63 cal	50 Kcal	3%	2.5%
Carbohydrates	16.1 g	12.18 g	12%	9%
Protein	1.06 g	1.00 g	2%	2%
Total Fat	0.2 g	0.3 g	1%	1.5%
Cholesterol	0 g	0 g	0%	0%
Dietary Fiber	2.1 g	1.6 g	5.5%	4%
<b>Vitamins</b>				
Folates	4 mcg	8 mcg	1%	2%
Niacin	0.154 mg	0.400 mg	1%	2.5%
Pantothenic acid	0.199 mg	0.143 mg	4%	3%
Pyridoxine	0.049 mg	0.044 mg	4%	3.5%
Riboflavin	0.033 mg	0.040 mg	2.5%	3%
Thiamin	0.027 mg	0.030 mg	2%	2.5%
Vitamin C	7 mg	10 mg	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Vitamin A	640IU	1283 IU	<b>21%</b>	<b>43%</b>
Vitamin E	0.07 mg	0.07 mg	0.5%	0.5%
Vitamin K	2.1 mcg	2.1 mcg	2%	2%
<b>Electrolytes</b>				
Sodium	0 mg	3mg	0%	0%
Potassium	222 mg	179mg	5%	4%
<b>Minerals</b>				
Calcium	13 mg	16 mg	1.3%	1.6%
Copper	0.060 mg	0.104 mg	7%	11.5%
Iron	0.36 mg	0.32 mg	4.5%	4%
Magnesium	11 mg	9mg	3%	2%
Manganese	0.070 mg	0.112mg	3%	5%
Phosphorus	21 mg	15 mg	3%	2%

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Zinc	0.07 mg	0.10 mg	0.5%	0.1%
<b>Phyto-nutrients</b>				
Carotene, alpha	0 mcg	0 mcg	--	
Carotene, beta	<b>38 mcg</b>	<b>770 mcg</b>	--	
Crypto-xanthin, β	0 mcg	0 mcg	--	
Lutein-zeaxanthin	85 mcg	85 mcg	--	

(Source: USDA Nutrient database)

### Selection and storage

Cherry fruit season lasts from May end until August in the United States. Fresh ripe cherries have short shelf life. In the store, choose cherries that have bright, shiny skin with green stalk firmly attached to the top of the fruit.

Keep fresh cherries in the refrigerator. Whenever you wish to eat them, just rinse cherries in lukewarm water to remove dust and to bring them to room temperature. Then, gently pat dry with soft cloth to remove moisture.

### Preparation and Serving method

To prepare cherry, remove the stalk, wash them gently in cold water, and pat dry in soft cloth. Ripe ones can be eaten as a whole including skin to get the maximum benefits.

Sweet cherries are being used in several recipes,

- Sweet cherries can be eaten all alone.
- In fruit cocktail made with cherry, [peach](#), [pineapple](#), pear and [grape](#).
- As fruit salad with [peach](#), [pear](#), [apricot](#) and pineapple.
- Add dried cherries in fruitcakes, bread, and cookie.
- Use them in desserts, pie fillings and toaster Pastries.

Tart cherries are mainly used in the preparation of sauce, pie fillings, jams, muffins and cheese cakes. Tart cherry fruit juice concentrate is a favorite refreshing drink among athletes and various sports personnel. Dried tart cherries make delicious additions to meals and snacks.

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