



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Berry Recipe That Takes the Cake

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Most days, it's hard to justify using fresh, ripe berries any way except straight out of a bowl. Some occasions, however, call for special foods – the kind that make a statement just sitting on the table, before anybody ever takes a bite.

For those occasions, consider Blueberry Lemon Pound Cake. It's the latest recipe from food expert Tammy Algood for Pick Tennessee Products, the statewide promotion developed by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to help consumers identify and choose foods grown or processed in Tennessee. Algood's recipes are available at www.PickTnProducts.org.

Starting in late April with strawberries, one berry crop after another ripens across Tennessee to provide a whole summer's worth of wholesome and so-sweet opportunities. Blueberries and raspberries begin to appear in June and stay available through July, finally giving way to blackberries in July and August.

Tennessee's topography and variable temperatures exert considerable influence over the timing of crops in Tennessee, with West Tennessee crops ripening first and East Tennessee crops ripening last. Regardless, May through August, there's some kind of great berry out there just waiting to be found at a local farmers market or straight from the patch on a pick-your-own farm.

Not all berries work equally well in all recipes, though, and Blueberry Lemon Pound Cake requires a berry with only so much moisture to add to the mix. Raspberries would substitute well, but strawberries would not.

To minimize "streaking" when adding blueberries to batter, wait until the rest of the batter is completely mixed, then gently fold fresh or frozen berries into the batter. Use batter quickly when blueberries are in the mix, as their blue color will begin to leach and color the batter.

Blueberries sometimes sink to the bottom of a baked dish if the specific gravity of the batter is too low. That makes pound cake, with its dense, thick batter, a great choice for showing off your berries. Another reason for "sunk" berries might be that too much air has been incorporated into the batter, so avoid over blending when creaming. Still worried? Just spread half of the batter in the pan, then all the blueberries, and top with remaining batter. Another anti-sinking option is to coat blueberries with flour before folding them into batter.

The secret to beautiful colored berries in baked goods is proper pH levels in the mixture. Blueberries turn reddish when exposed to acids like lemon juice and vinegar. Blueberries turn

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greenish-blue in a batter with too much baking soda, which creates an alkaline environment. That great blueberry taste, however is not affected.

Always call or e-mail ahead to verify hours, picking conditions and availability before making a trip to a farm. If berry picking is a family outing, it's a good idea to bring something to drink, snacks, hats and sunscreen. Insect repellent might be good to bring along if weather has been rainy. Berries do not ripen at all after picking, so pick only berries that are fully plump and pull free from the plant with barely a tug. Avoid placing picked berries in the sunlight any longer than necessary. Put picked berries in a shaded area other than inside a car, then cool them as soon as possible.

Find local pick-your-own berry farms, farmers markets, more recipes and information about other Tennessee farm products at www.PickTnProducts.org.

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PLEASE FIND A HI-RES DOWNLOADABLE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ATTACHED RECIPE AT WWW.PICKTNPRODUCTS.ORG. CLICK ON THE FEATURED RECIPE.

Blueberry Lemon Pound Cake

Yield: 12 to 16 servings
4 sticks unsalted butter, softened
3 cups sugar
6 eggs
4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
2 teaspoons pure lemon extract
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
2 cups fresh blueberries

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour the bottom and sides of a 10-inch tube or Bundt pan. Set aside. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar together at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, combine the milk, extract, lemon juice and zest. Add the dry and wet mixtures alternately to butter mixture, beginning and ending with the dry. Fold in the blueberries. Spread the batter into the prepared pan. Bake 50 to 60 minutes or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in the pan, then turn out onto a wire rack and cool completely before slicing.