

Tis the season of sweetness

According to the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), the United States is the largest exporter of essential oils (\$816M in 2020). Varieties of orange are the leading exported essential oil from the United States. In August 2022, the US exports of orange essential oils accounted for up to \$9.29M.



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Oranges were considered a special treat, especially during the Great Depression, as they were considered a luxury item. Oranges were often reserved for only the wealthy and the elite, something only the very rich could afford to eat during the year.



Oranges feature in holiday celebrations in the US. They're said to represent a gift of gold from Saint Nicholas, which is we often find them in the bottom of our stockings. Renowned for using his wealth to help others, St Nicholas learned of three sisters who could not be wed as they were too poor to afford a dowry. So he dropped three golden balls down their chimney to help them in their plight. The golden balls landed in stockings that were drying by the fire and so the oranges we give today came to represent the gold and generosity of St Nicholas.

Oranges symbolize the season of giving. The giving of oranges (balls of gold) in Christmas stockings is a symbol of charity and giving. Oranges in stockings serve as a reminder to care for others who are in need and less fortunate. Also, because the orange separates easily into segments, it is an ideal and easy fruit to share with others. We often give and share orange-flavored chocolates at holiday time.



The Christingle is a symbol The orange represents the world. The red ribbon (or tape) symbolizes the love and blood of Christ. The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations – including the 4 seasons. The four sticks can also be seen as North, South, East and West – representing the whole world. The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.

Historically pomanders were used as protection against infection in times of pestilence or merely as a useful article to modify bad smells from the mid-13th to the 17th century. The modern pomander of an orange studded with cloves serves the functions of perfuming and freshening the air and also of keeping drawers of clothing and linens fresh, pleasant-smelling, and moth-free. While this this tradition has been somewhat lost, many people still create these pomanders as scented holiday decorations.



Oranges are a wintertime constant in the fruit basket. This is largely and practically because oranges begin to ripen in November (at least in the Northern hemisphere). With that in mind, it makes sense that we make the most of this seasonal fruit during the holiday season.

The fruit can be sliced and dried and used in potpourri and holiday decorations.

Oranges feature in our holiday cooking. Whether used in a glaze for your ham or stuffed inside a turkey, citrus adds a nice refreshing aroma and flavor. It is often paired with cranberries in relishes and chutneys to accompany a holiday meal. I like to add 3-4 drops of Orange (*Citrus x sinensis*) essential oil to my favorite cranberry relish recipe. I also use Orange essential oil in my holiday drinks.



Festive Cranberry Orange Martini

5 fresh cranberries and a small spring of rosemary
 1/4-1/2 oz (7-14g) Simple Syrup* adjust to taste
 1 oz (28g) Unsweetened Cranberry Juice
 1/2 oz (14g) Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice
 1/2 oz (14g) Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur
 1 1/2 oz (42g) Gin
 2 drops Orange (*Citrus x sinensis*) essential oil or spritz the glass 2-3 times with spray.**

In a cocktail shaker, add the cranberries, simple syrup and rosemary leaves. Muddle until the cranberries pop. Add a handful of ice, cranberry juice, orange juice, Grand Marnier, and gin. Shake or stir. Taste for simple adjustment. Double strain into cocktail glasses and garnish with a slice of dried orange, rosemary sprig or sugared cranberries (see tip).

**The EOs won't completely dissolve in the cocktail. Alternatively, make a spray of 4 ml grain alcohol and 1 ml orange EO to spritz.

*Make your own **Rosemary Simple Syrup** or use store bought

Mix 1 cup of water with 1 cup of sugar in a small sauce pot over medium heat. Add 4-6 springs of fresh rosemary. Simmer until all the sugar has been dissolved. Let sit off the heat for 10 minutes. Remove the rosemary springs and allow the syrup to cool.

Tip: At the point when you remove the pot from heat, you can add a handful of fresh cranberries and let them steep for 10 min. Remove and let them dry for an hour. Toss the cranberries in sugar and skewer onto on toothpicks to garnish your cocktail.



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