



Cranberry Orange Holiday Glaze

A Jar of Ruby Red Joy

This sauce is my holiday table's little jewel. It shines like rubies. It tastes like a sweet, tart hug. I make it every year without fail.

My grandson once called it "Christmas jam." I still laugh at that. But he was right. It's that special. What's one food that tastes like the holidays to you? I'd love to know.

Why This Simple Sauce Matters

Good food is about more than taste. It's about memories. This sauce matters because it brings people together. It turns a simple meal into a celebration.

It also teaches us a lesson. The best flavors often come from just a few good things. You don't need a long list. You just need care. That's a good thing to remember in the kitchen and in life.

The Berry Pop Symphony

Let's get cooking. Put your water, sugar, orange zest, and a pinch of salt in a pot. Bring it to a boil. Stir until the sugar disappears.

Now, stir in all those bright cranberries. Listen closely as it simmers. You'll hear a soft *pop, pop, pop*. That's the music! It means your sauce is coming together. Simmer until most berries have burst open. Doesn't that smell amazing?

A Zesty Little Secret

Here's my mini-story. I used to add orange juice to this. It made the sauce too thin. The flavor was weak. I was missing the magic part.

The magic is in the zest. That's the bright orange skin. It holds all the sunny oil and flavor. *Fun fact: The zest has way more flavor than the juice!* After cooking, stir in a splash of orange liqueur. It wakes all the flavors up. Do you prefer recipes with a little secret step, or do you like them super simple?

Frozen or Fresh, It's All Good

Don't worry if you only have frozen berries. Use them straight from the freezer. Just cook them a few minutes longer. They work perfectly.

Let your sauce cool in a glass or ceramic bowl. The color gets deeper as it sits. Make it up to a week ahead. The wait makes it taste even better.

Trust me on this.

See also [Sticky Paws Holiday Cookie Bark](#)

Your Glaze, Your Way

This sauce is a friendly neighbor. It gets along with everyone. Pour it over turkey or ham. Stir it into yogurt. Spread it on toast.

It's your creation. Make it a little tarter or sweeter next time if you like. Cooking is about making it yours. Will you try it on something sweet or something savory first? Tell me your plan.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
water	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	
granulated sugar	1 cup	
orange zest	1 tablespoon	grated
table salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon	
cranberries	1 (12-ounce) bag picked through	
orange liqueur	2 tablespoons	such as Triple Sec or Grand Marnier



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Instructions

Step 1: Grab your favorite saucepan. Pour in the water, sugar, orange zest, and salt. Turn the heat to high. Stir it now and then until it boils. The sugar will just disappear. Doesn't that smell amazing already?

Step 2: Now, stir in all those shiny cranberries. They'll look so pretty in the pot. Let it come back to a good, rolling boil. Listen for the happy bubbling sound. I still laugh at how they start to dance.

Step 3: Turn the heat down to medium. Let it simmer for about 5 minutes. Watch the berries pop open like little jewels. (If you use frozen berries, just add 2 more minutes here.) The sauce will thicken just right. **Do you think it's done when most berries have popped? Share below!**

Step 4: Turn the heat off completely. This part is important. Carefully stir in the orange liqueur. It will sizzle and smell wonderful. That's where the real orange magic happens, my dear.

Step 5: Pour your beautiful sauce into a nice bowl. Let it cool on the counter. It thickens more as it cools. (Always use a glass or ceramic bowl, not metal.) You can make it up to a week ahead. Just let it sit out before serving.

Creative Twists

Ginger Snap: Add a teaspoon of grated fresh ginger with the cranberries. It gives a lovely, warm little kick.

Vanilla Dream: Stir in a splash of vanilla extract right at the end. It

makes the whole thing smell like a bakery.

See also Gruyère and Pancetta Broccolini Holiday Sauté

Spiced Orange: Add a cinnamon stick or a pinch of cloves while it simmers. Remember to take the stick out later. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This glaze is my holiday superstar. I love it spooned over a simple roast turkey. It's also divine on warm brie cheese with crackers. For dessert, try it on vanilla ice cream or pound cake. The tartness is just perfect. For a drink, a glass of sparkling wine pairs beautifully. For the little ones, a fizzy orange soda feels special. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Glaze Happy

This sauce is a wonderful make-ahead friend. Let it cool completely first. Then pop it in a jar in the fridge. It keeps for a whole week. You can also freeze it for up to three months. I use old yogurt containers for freezing.

Thaw it overnight in the fridge. Let it sit on the counter for 30 minutes before serving. This brings back its glossy shine. I once served it straight from the fridge. It was too firm and not as bright. A little patience makes it perfect.

Batch cooking matters for a calm holiday. Making it ahead saves you time and stress. You get to enjoy your own party. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Smooth Sailing for Your Sauce

Sometimes cooking has little bumps. Here is how to fix them. First, your sauce might be too thin. Just simmer it for a few more minutes. It will thicken as it cools, too.

Second, the sauce could be too tart for you. Stir in one more tablespoon of sugar. Taste it until it makes you smile. I remember when I made it too sour once. A little extra sugar saved the day.

Third, your berries might not all pop open. That is perfectly fine. It gives your sauce a nice texture. Getting the flavor right builds your cooking confidence. A balanced sauce makes every bite joyful. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this gluten-free? A: Yes, all these ingredients are naturally gluten-free.

See also Golden Crisp Turkey with Herbed Butter Glaze

Q: Can I make it ahead? A: Absolutely. Make it up to seven days before you need it.

Q: What if I don't have orange liqueur? A: Use two extra teaspoons of orange zest. *Fun fact: The zest holds the strongest orange oil.*

Q: Can I double the recipe? A: You can. Just use a bigger pot so it doesn't boil over.

Q: Any special tip? A: Use a microplane to zest the orange. It gets the zest fine and fluffy. **Which tip will you try first?**

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe becomes part of your family story. It is a little jar of sunshine on a cold day. Cooking is about sharing warmth and good taste.

I would love to hear about your cooking adventure. Tell me what you served it with. **Have you tried this recipe?** Your stories are my favorite thing to read.

Happy cooking! —Elowen Thorn.



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Author: Elowen Thorn



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Cooking Method:[Stovetop](#)



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Cuisine:[American](#)



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Courses:[Side](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **5 minutes**

Cook time: **10 minutes**



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Rest time: **30 minutes**

Total time: **45 minutes**



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Servings: 2.5 cups

Calories: **50 kcal**

Best Season: Summer

Description

A vibrant and tangy Cranberry-Orange Sauce, perfect for holiday meals.

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon table salt
- 1 (12-ounce) bag cranberries, picked through
- 2 tablespoons orange liqueur (such as Triple Sec or Grand Marnier)

Instructions

1. Bring water, sugar, orange zest, and salt to boil in medium nonreactive saucepan over high heat, stirring occasionally to dissolve sugar.
2. Stir in cranberries; return to boil.
3. Reduce heat to medium; simmer until saucy, slightly thickened, and about two-thirds of berries have popped open, about 5 minutes.
4. Off heat; stir in orange liqueur.
5. Transfer to nonreactive bowl, cool to room temperature, and serve. (Can be covered and refrigerated up to 7 days; let stand at room temperature 30 minutes before serving.)

Notes

The cooking time in this recipe is intended for fresh berries. If you've got frozen cranberries, do not defrost them before use; just pick through them and add about 2 minutes to the simmering time. Orange juice adds little flavor, but we found that zest and liqueur pack the orange kick we were looking for in this sauce.



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