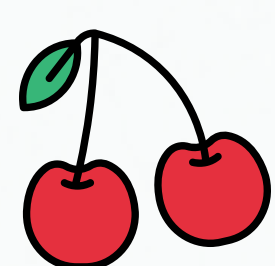


Christmas Summer Fruits and Nuts

Kia ora koutou,

There are only 14 more sleeps to Christmas! The holiday season is approaching and it's the time for family gatherings, festive feasts, and making the most of the long, sunny days. It's hard to believe how quickly time has passed since the beginning of the year, and now the end of the year is upon us in what seems like the blink of an eye.

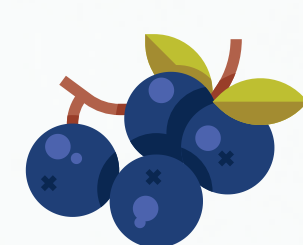
What better way to embrace the spirit of Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere than by indulging in bounty of summer fruits that our beautiful Aotearoa has to offer? From mid-December to February, you'll find a vibrant array of fresh, sun-ripened treasures to tantalise your taste buds, and also to help you practise seasonal eating and reduce your carbon footprint by purchasing locally grown produce.



1. **Cherries:** Around 90% of New Zealand cherries are grown in Central Otago, the rest come from Hawkes Bay. Most cherries have a firm texture, bursting with sweet and delectable flavour each bite. Popping a few cherries on a warm summer's day is a simple yet delightful pleasure.



2. **Stone fruits:** Peaches, nectarines, plums, and apricots are juicy and are excellent source of fibre, which promotes gut movement and healthy digestion.



3. **Berries:** Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries are in abundance during the summer months. Their sweet and tangy flavours are perfect for creating refreshing desserts or enjoying as a healthy snack.

If you are after some last-minute Christmas gift ideas, instead of running to the shops to grab the 'next best thing' you can find, try making this delicious recipe below and popping the nuts in a used jar. Ensure you clean the jar well with hot soapy water and dry it completely before filling it with the roasted and cooled nuts. For a gift you could wash off the original label and decorate the jar with paint, put a bow around it or make a decorative cover for the top with a piece of Christmassy fabric.

Spiced Mixed Nuts

- 4 cups of mixed nuts, e.g., peanuts, brazil nuts, macadamias, blanched almonds, cashews
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon butter

1. Preheat oven to 175°C. Combine nuts in a large bowl. Add salt, black pepper, cumin, and cayenne, toss to coat.

2. Heat sugar, water, and butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook until butter is melted, and sugar is dissolved, about 1 minute. Slowly pour butter mixture over nuts and stir to coat.

3. Transfer nuts to a lined baking tray and spread into a single layer.

4. Bake nuts in the preheated oven for 10 minutes or until toasted. Nuts will go crunchy as they cool. Transfer into jar or airtight container once they are completely cool; they will keep fresh for 1-2 weeks but you won't be able to wait that long to eat them!

Wishing everyone a lovely and joyful holiday. Meri Kirihimete and see you again next year!

Ngā mihi nui,
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