



NUTRITION &
FOOD SERVICES
NOBLESVILLE SCHOOLS

TAKE A TASTE

At Home

Blood Orange

Fun Facts about Blood Oranges:

- February is National Heart Health Month! Blood oranges are featured because they contain several nutrients that help your heart pump blood throughout your body easier. They also help protect the heart against cardiovascular disease and stroke.
- Blood oranges get their name due to their deep red color. This color is produced from a plant color pigment called anthocyanin. Anthocyanins are typically found in flowers and berries (raspberries, blueberries), and are what impart a red-blue tint. It is rare that citrus fruits contain anthocyanins. Blood oranges express this pigment due to a natural genetic transcriptional mutation of the 'Ruby' gene.
- The intense red color of the anthocyanins in blood oranges is developed when the fruit is exposed to cold temperature condition during its growth and post-harvest.
- The first blood orange originated in Sicily, Italy in the 1600's. The climate of Italy is conducive to developing the red color pigments due to cooler temperatures at night.

Blood Orange Nutrition & Heart Health:

Blood oranges support heart health due to the good sources of phytochemicals, fiber, vitamin C, potassium, magnesium, and folate that they contain.

Q: What is a vampire's favorite fruit?
A: The Blood Orange

Phytochemicals:

These natural bioactive plant compounds impart health benefits. Specifically in blood oranges, the anthocyanins are a type of phytochemical that help lower blood pressure, decrease "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels, decrease blood vessel inflammation, increase "good" HDL cholesterol, and mitigate other factors associated with the development of cardiovascular disease.

Magnesium:

Helps regulate muscle function, including the rhythm of your heartbeat.

Potassium:

Helps control the balance of fluids in the body and helps the heart muscle work properly

Folate:

Helps balance homocysteine levels to prevent swelling of arteries and blood vessels.

Vitamin C:

Helps promote blood vessel flexibility and normal blood pressure.

Fiber:

Binds to LDL cholesterol in the digestive tract and prevents absorption into the bloodstream. It also helps regulate blood pressure and reduce inflammation to reduce the overall risk of heart disease.



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STEM Connection: Model your Blood Flow



Follow this [LINK](#) to sciencebuddies.org to create your own Blood Flow Model and see how blood flows through your arteries. Healthy cardiovascular systems have efficient blood flow, where blood vessels are wide and unobstructed. This allows blood to transport oxygen and nutrients easily through the circulatory system.

The most common problem with the circulatory system is coronary heart disease, which is caused by buildup of cholesterol and plaque in the arteries. Over time, the plaque can grow thicker, causing the blood vessels to become narrower and hindering the amount of blood that can travel throughout the body. The decrease in oxygenated blood can lead to chest pains and heart attacks. The plaque sometimes becomes dislodged and forms blood clots that block the blood flow, which can also cause heart attacks and strokes.

This is why it's so important to take care of your heart! Eating right and getting plenty of exercise will help protect your heart and help your blood vessels stay healthy and clear!

Did you know that school meals are based off of a healthy eating pattern? Aim to fill half of your tray with fruits and vegetables, choose whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat milk!

Try It at Home!

Blood Orange Salsa



Ingredients: (4 servings)

- 1 blood orange, diced
- 1/4 small red onion, minced
- 1/2 jalapeño, finely diced
- 5 sprigs cilantro, finely minced
- 2 small roma tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Combine all diced ingredients into a bowl.
2. With a spoon or spatula, gently fold ingredients together.
3. Adjust salt to preference and toss salsa together once more.
4. Allow salsa to sit in the fridge for at least 15 minutes before serving.

*Serving Tip: Serve with multigrain tortilla chips or serve on top of fish tacos or grilled chicken.