

## Facts and Folklore

Blackberries are also known as brambleberries, brambles, dewberries, thimbleberries.

Blackberries make excellent facepaints!



It has been said that when the devil was cast out from heaven by St Michael, he landed in a bramble bush and cursed it; this is what made the blackberries unpalatable after the 29th September (St Michael's day). Foragers were advised to avoid eating blackberries picked after this date.

The dark colour of the blackberry shows that it has one of the highest antioxidant levels of all fruits and they are best eaten raw to get the full benefits.

## BANANA AND BLACKBERRY ICE CREAM

### Ingredients

3-4 large bananas, 200g frozen blackberries, maple syrup or honey to taste

### Instructions:

Peel and chop the bananas into rounds, then lay them out on a lined baking tray and freeze overnight until solid. Once you're ready to make the ice cream, throw the banana pieces and frozen blackberries into a high-speed blender and whizz them up together until smooth. You'll probably find that the fruit breaks up into a crumbly texture and you need to scrape down the sides several times but be patient and continue to blend it until it becomes smooth and creamy. Taste the mixture and add maple syrup or honey to taste if needed. This will really depend on the ripeness of both the bananas and blackberries - the riper they are the sweeter it will be. Once smooth, serve immediately or pop into a cake tin or plastic tub and return to the freezer until ready to serve.

## How to freeze blackberries

Gently place the blackberries into a colander, and rinse in cool water.

Remove stems, leaves and any damaged berries.

Spread the blackberries out on a baking tray in a single layer and place in the freezer.

Once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag or container.



## Recipes

# Playful springboards: BLACKBERRY

## JAM TECHNIQUES

The rule is to weigh the blackberries and add the same amount of sugar.

You can also add a tablespoon of lemon juice to enhance the flavour.

Elderberries make a good addition to this jam. For a lower sugar version use a 1:3 ratio of sugar to fruit.

As blackberries are high in pectin, a good set will be achieved if the mixture is cooked for long enough.



## BLACKBERRY JAM

### Ingredients

Blackberries, sugar, lemon Juice

### Method

Place a plate in the freezer for the setting point test. Wash the blackberries and add the sugar to them in the pan. Mash the fruit as it heats to release the flavour. Add the lemon juice. It will need to be carefully watched and stirred as it reaches the boil - beware hot sugar! Keep the mixture simmering until it turns more gel-like and glossy. Take the cool plate from the fridge and put a spoonful of the mixture onto the plate to test the set.

If the jam wrinkles as you run your finger through the cooling mixture, it is ready. If not, cook for longer. Once your jam has set, leave to cool and pour in to sterilised jam jars.

## DAMPERS

### Ingredients

Self-raising flour, lemonade, jam, marshmallows, raisins, chocolate spread.

### Method

Fill a bowl with self-raising flour and add lemonade to create the consistency of a soft dough.

Take a stick with the end whittled, washed or covered in foil (to provide a 'clean' cooking surface).

Wrap the dough around the end of stick and ensuring it is secure and creates a spiral or a tube around the stick.

Place the dough end of the stick above the campfire, close to the heat but not directly in the flames.

Once your dough is cooked, slide it from the stick - it will be hot! Add a bit of butter to the inside and some campfire made and foraged blackberry jam.

Experiment with all sorts of fillings for the dampers including mini marshmallows, chocolate spread, raisins and more - get creative!



# Recipes

## Recipes

### BLACKBERRY FLAPJACKS

*Ideal for picnics or outdoor adventures!*

#### Ingredients

350g blackberries, 25g caster sugar, 250g oats,  
140g butter, 50g light brown sugar  
140g golden syrup

#### Method

Preheat the oven to Gas mark 5/ 190°C.

Grease and line an 18cm baking tin.

Cook the blackberries and caster sugar in a pan until soft;  
set aside and let them cool

In another pan melt all the other ingredients together.

Press half of the oat mixture into the tin; layer the  
fruit on top and finish with the remaining oat mix.

Bake for 25 minutes and cut them  
before moving them from the  
tin once they are cool.



### PLUS!

Add mashed blackberries to a  
pancake batter.

Add blackberries to the bottom of  
cupcake cases before adding the batter.

Make a warm sauce with fruit, sugar and  
vanilla essence to pour over ice-cream.

Add to smoothies and milkshakes for  
a zing of colour and flavour.

What else?

### HAPA ZOME

The strong pigment of blackberries  
makes them ideal for Hapa Zome, the art of  
mark making using plant pigments.

Collect blackberries and other richly pigmented  
leaves and flowers, and arrange them in patterns  
onto half of a rectangle of cotton cloth.

Fold the cloth in half, to completely cover the plants  
and crush them by bashing them with a stone or  
a hammer.

On unfolding the cloth, deeply coloured  
marks will be left behind on each side  
of it.

# Playful springboards: BLACKBERRY

## Practical Uses

### BLACKBERRY PAINT

The colour of blackberries is so strong it makes an ideal paint. Collect blackberries and other brightly pigmented berries, taking care not to pick any poisonous plants. Use a pestle and mortar to mash out the colour, adding water if needed or a beaten egg yolk. Push the pulpy liquid through a tea strainer to make the mixture smooth. Use the resulting liquid to create your art.

### BLACKBERRY PLAYDOUGH

*Warning – not edible* 

#### You need

2 parts plain flour, 1 part salt, handful of blackberries for colour, tablespoon of cooking oil, 1 part water

#### Method

Mix together the flour and salt. Crush the blackberries to a soft pulp. Stir the blackberries and oil into the flour and salt with enough water to make a thick soft dough and knead until smooth.

#### Make Pretend Ice Cream Cones

Cut out a large circle of card then cut it in half. Draw a crisscross texture across the semi-circles. Roll each semi-circle into a cone and hold in place with sticky tape.

### Dyeing with blackberries

*This is very messy so do it outdoors, or protect your surfaces!*

#### You need

2 cups of blackberries, ½ cup of salt, water, fabric

#### Method

Simmer 2 cups of blackberries and 4 cups of water over a low heat for one hour. Strain the berries from the liquid and return the liquid to the pot. In a separate bowl or bucket mix ½ cup of salt and 8 cups of water. Soak the fabric in the salt mixture for one hour then rinse it with cold water. Add the damp fabric to the berry liquid in the pot and bring to the boil. Leave it on a low heat for one hour (watching it carefully) then remove from the heat. For a darker hue, leave the fabric to soak for a few hours with the heat off. Rinse out the excess dye and hang to dry. Wash the fabric with similar dark colours, as the dye will wash out and the colours will fade over time.

### FORAGING

Foraging for wild fruit might be a new idea for the young people you are working with. It can be great fun and give them chance to engage with nature and work as a team towards a goal such as collecting fruit for a specific recipe or activity. You may like to take this a bit further and introduce the idea of a scavenger hunt. These can be organised with an element of competition: first group back having found everything or the most unusual finds. The essential idea with a scavenger hunt is that young people are sent out into an agreed area either in teams or individuals with a list of things to find or challenges to do and come back with evidence they have completed them.



Foraging