

## Avocados: A Baker's Secret Ingredient

(NAPSA)—Avocados are most traditionally used as the main ingredient in guacamole or to top off a sandwich or salad. However, they also can star as a delicious ingredient in baked goods.

You might not immediately think of avocados as something to use in baking, but this versatile fruit is a great item to include in your recipes.

Health-conscious bakers can substitute avocado for many traditional baking ingredients, such as butter or shortening. Simply replace these ingredients with an equal amount of avocado (e.g., replace one cup of butter, with one cup of mashed avocado) in any muffin, quick bread and even some brownie and cookie recipes.

By substituting avocado, the nutritional value of the baked good is increased with the fruit's contribution of nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, along with "good fats" (poly- and monounsaturated fats). Additionally, the overall calories in a recipe can be reduced by substituting avocado for an ingredient such as butter. Two tablespoons of avocado has 50 calories, two tablespoons of butter totals 204 calories.

In addition to their creamy texture and mild flavor, California avocados have a high water content, so they can also make treats softer, chewier and less likely to crumble. Also, some baked goods will take on a beautiful light green tint from the avocado.

Right now is the perfect time to try California avocados in baked goods, as spring through fall marks California avocado season. Here is a delicious recipe for California Avocado, Cranberry and Pistachio Biscotti.



The recipe for this delicious biscotti secretly uses California avocados as a substitute for butter.

### California Avocado, Cranberry and Pistachio Biscotti

*Yields: 32 biscotti cookies*

#### Ingredients

- 1½ cups dried cranberries
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 tsp. grated orange peel
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ cup mashed ripe, fresh California avocado\*
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¾ cup shelled pistachio nuts
- 1 Tbsp. low-fat milk

#### Instructions

1. In a small pan, combine cranberries and orange juice. Cover and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, stir in orange peel and let stand until ready to use.
2. Sift together flour, baking soda and salt; set aside.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine avocado, lemon juice and sugar. Beat for 1 minute until smooth.
4. Add eggs, one at a time, to avocado mixture, beating well until blended. Add vanilla and beat until mixed in.
5. With beater at medium

speed, add flour mixture, one cup at a time, scraping down bowl after each cup. Beat until blended.

6. Mix in cranberry-orange mixture and pistachio nuts by hand, blending well.

7. Turn out dough onto lightly floured board. Divide mixture in half. Roll each half on board until lightly coated with flour; form into a ½-inch thick and 4-inch wide log. Brush top of each log with milk.

8. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Transfer logs to cookie sheet. Bake in preheated 325°F oven for 35 minutes.

9. Remove logs from oven and place on cooling rack. Allow to cool for 20 minutes.

10. Slice each log into ½-inch thick slices. Place a cooling rack on a cookie sheet and arrange slices, cut side up. Bake in 300°F oven for 15 minutes. Turn each cookie over and bake additional 15 minutes; cool. Repeat process with remaining slices. Cool and store in airtight container.

**Tip:** ¼ cup mashed avocado is equivalent to approximately ¼ of a large avocado. Remaining avocado can be used for other recipes, or when mashed, can be stored in freezer for future use.

*Nutrition Information Per Cookie: Calories 90; Total Fat 2 g (Sat 0 g, Trans 0 g, Poly 0.4 g, Mono 0.8 g); Cholesterol 20 mg; Sodium 105 mg; Total Carbohydrates 17 g; Dietary Fiber 1 g; Protein 2 g*

\*Large avocados are recommended for this recipe. A large avocado averages about 8 ounces. If using smaller or larger size avocados, adjust the quantity accordingly.

For other delicious recipes that feature California avocados, visit [CaliforniaAvocado.com](http://CaliforniaAvocado.com).