Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes
Total Time: 30 minutes (plus cooling and chilling time)
Servings: Makes about 8 cups (8 servings)

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Introduction

There is something deeply satisfying about making your own juice at home, and this Easy Canned Cranberry Juice is the perfect place to start. Using just a few simple ingredients—fresh or frozen cranberries, water, and your sweetener of choice—you can create a vibrant, ruby-red juice that is far superior to anything you will find in a store-bought bottle. It is tart, refreshing, and endlessly customizable, whether you prefer it lightly sweetened or pleasantly sharp.

This recipe is designed for home canning enthusiasts and beginners alike. The process is straightforward: simmer the cranberries to extract their bright, tangy flavor, strain the mixture, sweeten it to your liking, and then process the jars for shelf-stable storage. The

result is a beautiful pantry staple that you can enjoy all year round—poured over ice, mixed into cocktails, or warmed up as a soothing winter drink. Best of all, homemade cranberry juice contains no artificial preservatives, colors, or high-fructose corn syrup, making it a wholesome and delicious alternative to commercial juices.

Ingredients

For the Juice:

- 12 oz (about 3 cups) fresh or frozen cranberries, rinsed
- 8 cups water
- ¾ to 1 cup granulated sugar (or honey, maple syrup, or erythritol for a low-carb version), adjusted to taste
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional, for brightness)
- 1 cinnamon stick (optional, for a warm spiced note)
- 2-3 whole cloves (optional)

For Canning (if preserving):

- 4 pint (16 oz) glass canning jars with lids and bands, sterilized

- Large canning pot with a rack
- Jar lifter and funnel

Equipment

- Large saucepan or stockpot
- Fine-mesh strainer or cheesecloth
- Potato masher or wooden spoon
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Canning jars (if preserving)
- Large pot for water bath canning
- Funnel and jar lifter

Instructions

Phase 1: Prep the Ingredients (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Wash the Cranberries: Rinse the fresh or frozen cranberries thoroughly under cold running water. Pick through them and discard any soft, bruised, or shriveled berries.

2. Sterilize the Jars: If you plan to can the juice, wash the jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water. Sterilize them by boiling in a large pot of water for 10 minutes, or run them through a dishwasher cycle on the hottest setting. Keep the jars hot until ready to fill.

3. Prep the Sweetener: Measure out your sweetener of choice. If using honey or maple syrup, have it ready in a small bowl.

Phase 2: Simmer the Cranberries (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Combine Ingredients: In a large saucepan or stockpot, combine the cranberries and water. If using the cinnamon stick and cloves, add them now.

2. Bring to a Boil: Place the pot over medium-high heat and bring the mixture to a rolling boil.

3. Simmer: Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until the cranberries have burst open and softened completely. Use a potato masher or the back of a wooden spoon to gently crush the berries and release more flavor.

4. Add Sweetener: Stir in the sugar (or alternative sweetener) and lemon juice. Continue to simmer for another 2-3 minutes, stirring until the sweetener is fully dissolved. Taste the juice and adjust the sweetness to your preference—cranberries are naturally very tart, so do not be afraid to add a little more sweetener if needed.

Phase 3: Strain the Juice (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Set Up the Strainer: Place a fine-mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth (or a clean kitchen towel) over a large bowl or pitcher.

2. Strain: Carefully pour the hot cranberry mixture through the strainer. Allow the juice to drain naturally—do not press down on the solids, as this can make the juice cloudy.

3. Discard Solids: Once the juice has fully drained, discard the cranberry pulp and spices.

4. Taste & Adjust: Taste the strained juice and add more sweetener or lemon juice if desired.

Phase 4: Canning the Juice (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Note: If you are not canning, skip to Phase 5. The juice can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

1. Prepare the Water Bath: Fill a large canning pot with water and bring it to a boil. Make sure there is enough water to cover the jars by at least 1 inch.

2. Fill the Jars: Using a funnel, carefully ladle the hot juice into the sterilized jars, leaving about ¼ inch of headspace at the top.

3. Remove Air Bubbles: Gently tap the jars on the counter to release any air bubbles. Wipe the rims clean with a damp cloth.

4. Seal the Jars: Place the lids on the jars and tighten the bands until fingertip-tight.

5. Process: Carefully lower the jars into the boiling water bath using a jar lifter. Ensure the jars are fully submerged. Process for 10 minutes (adjust for altitude if necessary).

6. Cool & Check Seals: Remove the jars from the water bath and place them on a towel to cool undisturbed for 12-24 hours. Check the seals by pressing the center of each lid—it should not pop up. If any jars did not seal, refrigerate them and use within a week.

Phase 5: Chill & Serve (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Chill: Refrigerate the juice for at least 2 hours before serving for the best flavor.

2. Serve: Pour over ice and garnish with fresh cranberries, a lemon slice, or a sprig of rosemary. Enjoy!

Flavor Variations

- Spiced Cranberry Juice: Add the cinnamon stick and cloves during simmering for a warm, cozy flavor. Perfect for the holidays.
- Cranberry-Apple Juice: Replace 2 cups of water with 2 cups of unsweetened apple juice for a naturally sweeter, fruitier blend.
- Cranberry-Orange: Add the zest of 1 orange and ½ cup of fresh orange juice after straining for a bright, citrusy twist.
- Low-Carb Cranberry Juice: Use erythritol or monk fruit sweetener instead of sugar. Note that the carb count will be significantly lower.
- Cranberry Ginger: Add a 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced, during simmering for a subtle spicy kick.

Nutrition

Note: Nutritional information is an estimate based on 1 cup of juice sweetened with sugar. Values will vary depending on the sweetener used.

Serving Size: 1 cup
Calories: 85
Total Fat: 0g
Saturated Fat: 0g
Cholesterol: 0mg
Sodium: 5mg

Total Carbohydrates: 21g
Dietary Fiber: 0g
Sugars: 20g
Protein: 0g