

# MENASHA PUBLIC LIBRARY:

## SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB



### WHAT IS HIBISCUS?

**HIBISCUS (HIBISCUS SABDARIFFA) BELONGS TO THE MALLOW FAMILY AND LIKELY ORIGINATED IN WEST AFRICA. HIBISCUS IS RECOGNIZED BY ITS VARIEGATED LEAVES AND BRIGHT RED BLOSSOMS. IT IS A PERENNIAL THAT GROWS BEST IN WELL-DRAINED SOIL, MAINLY IN TROPICAL CLIMATES. THE PART OF THE PLANT USED IN TEAS AND SNACKS IS THE CALYX, WHICH COVERS THE PLANT'S PETALS BEFORE IT FLOWS. HIBISCUS'S FLAVOR IS MOSTLY TART, BUT WITH FRUITY BACKGROUND NOTES. MANY PEOPLE COMPARE IT TO THE FLAVOR OF CRANBERRIES OR POMEGRANATES.**

**HIBISCUS WAS ORIGINALLY CULTIVATED FOR ITS FIBERS TO FABRICATE SUGAR SACKS FOR THE INDONESIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY. THE LEAVES AND STALKS OF THE PLANT ARE OFTEN USED IN SALADS OR STEAMED FOR USE IN RICE DISHES OR STIR-FRIES. BY AND LARGE, THE BIGGEST USE OF HIBISCUS IN THE WEST IS IN TEA FORM. IT CAN BE DRUNK HOT, BUT IN MANY TROPICAL COUNTRIES, IT IS SERVED SWEETENED AND COLD OVER ICE. IN MEXICO, IT IS KNOWN AS AGUA FRESCA. IN JAMAICA, THIS DRINK IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE END-OF-YEAR HOLIDAY SEASON AND IT MAY BE ENHANCED WITH SPICES AND RUM.**

**MAY**

**HIBISCUS**



## 8 USES FOR HIBISCUS

- **HIBISCUS IS A NATURAL SOURCE OF ALPHA-HYDROXY ACIDS (AHAs), WHICH HELP IMPROVE THE TEXTURE AND PIGMENT OF YOUR SKIN. THE POWDER CAN ALSO BE USED AS A NATURAL SKIN AND SCALP EXFOLIANT.**
- **HIBISCUS POWDER CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH 6 PERCENT OF THE VITAMIN A THAT YOU NEED ON A DAILY BASIS IN EACH 100G SERVING. A 100G SERVING OF HIBISCUS POWDER CAN ALSO SUPPLY AS MUCH AS 31 PERCENT OF THE VITAMIN C THAT YOU NEED EACH DAY.**
- **SOME FLAVOR PAIRINGS THAT GO WITH HIBISCUS INCLUDE: LAVENDER, MINT, ROSEMARY AND THYME.**
- **THERE HAVE BEEN SOME STUDIES SUGGESTING THAT HIBISCUS TEA IS EFFECTIVE FOR REDUCING BLOOD PRESSURE IN PEOPLE WITH MILD HYPERTENSION OR PRE-HYPERTENSION. HIBISCUS TEA CONTAINS ANTHOCYANINS, COMPOUNDS THAT RELAX BLOOD VESSELS.**
- **ICED HIBISCUS TEA IS A GREAT DRINK FOR THE SUMMER, AS IT AIDS THE BODY'S NATURAL COOLING MECHANISMS.**
- **MAKE A HIBISCUS SYRUP (STIR WITH WATER AND SUGAR OVER MEDIUM HEAT FOR FIVE MINUTES) TO JAZZ UP COCKTAILS AND TEA.**
- **MODERN BREEDERS HAVE CREATED MANY HYBRID ITERATIONS OF THE HIBISCUS PLANT THAT INCLUDES COLOR VARIATIONS AND EVEN WINDOWSILL-READY PLANTS.**
- **LOOKING TO BAKE A SWEET BREAD OR CAKE? TRY ADDING 1/2 A TEASPOON HIBISCUS FLOWER FOR EACH CUP OF FLOUR.**



### Add Hibiscus to:

**-Jams**  
**-Mocktails**  
**or Cocktails**  
**-Yogurt**



*Note: This information is meant to supplement, not replace advice from your healthcare provider and is not meant to cover all possible uses, precautions, interactions or adverse effects.*

*Sources Consulted: Encyclopedia Britannica; Consumer Health Complete; spiceography.com; Gale Health and Wellness; MasterClass*

# Hibiscus Lemon Cookies

Courtesy of: [food52.com](http://food52.com)



## Time:

Prep: 15  
Minutes

Cook Time:  
12 Minutes

Total Time:  
27 Minutes

## Yield:

4 Dozen

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups All purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon Hibiscus Powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1/4 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1/2 cup Unsalted Butter (1 Stick), room temperature
- 3/4 cup Granulated Sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon Salt
- 1 Large Egg
- 1 tablespoon Fresh Squeezed Lemon Juice (about 1/2 of a lemon)
- 1/4 Pure Lemon Extract or 1/8 tsp. Lemon Oil
- Finely Grated Zest of One Lemon
- Sparkling Sugar, for coating

## Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix together the flour, hibiscus powder, baking powder, and baking soda; set aside. In large mixing bowl, use electric mixer to beat butter, sugar and salt until light and fluffy.
2. Add egg, lemon juice, lemon zest and lemon extract; beat until well combined; remove beaters. Using heavy-duty wooden spoon, add flour mixture and mix until just combined (it will seem too dry, at first, but will be soft and sticky when combined.)
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 1/2 hours. When ready to bake, line 2 cookie sheets or sheet pans with parchment paper; preheat oven to 350°F.
4. Working one at a time, form dough into 1" ball and roll into sparkling sugar. Place on lined baking sheet; press down lightly. Repeat with remaining dough, spacing cookies one inch apart.
5. Bake at 350F for approximately 10 minutes for softer cookie to 12-13 minutes for crisper cookie. Cool on baking sheets on wire racks for a few minutes; serve or store in airtight container.
6. The hibiscus powder is red, but the cookies will be a nice lavender color. You could roll them in the sparkling sugar and then use a cookie stamp.

# Cranberry-Hibiscus Granola

Courtesy of: [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

## Time:

Prep: 10 Minutes

Cook Time: 25 Minutes

Total Time: 35 Minutes

## Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Pour oats, almonds, coconut, cashews, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds onto a rimmed baking sheet. Add maple syrup, oil, and salt; toss together until evenly coated.
3. Bake in the preheated oven, tossing once, until golden and crisp, 25 to 30 minutes. Add cranberries and hibiscus petals and toss with a spoon to combine. Let cool.



## Ingredients

- 4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- ½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- ¼ cup raw cashews
- ¼ cup whole raw hazelnuts
- ¼ cup raw sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup unsalted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons safflower oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup dried hibiscus petals, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup of your dried fruit of choice

Yield:

24

Servings

*Per Serving: 156 calories, 8g fat, 18g carbohydrate, 4g protein.*