

# It's Northwest Cherry Season

Posted on [July 6, 2012](#) by [Janet Muniz](#)

*Abundant baskets of locally grown cherries fill farmers market tables this time of year.  
Who can resist a little taste of the sweet, voluptuous Rainier?*



**Cherry Power.** Whether it's golden-pink or purple-red, cherries have been popular since the 1400's -and considered a superfood. One cup of anti-oxidant-rich cherries has just 90 calories and is a good source of fiber and vitamin C. A natural source of melatonin, eating a handful of cherries just before bed is a great way to naturally regulate your sleep cycle. Adding cherries to your diet can also help relieve the pain of arthritis and gout. Cherry juice is just as helpful, health-wise. The Portuguese make a tasty -and potent- liqueur from them (Ginja d' Óbidos) ... and I just learned how

to make a salsa with them.

*Why didn't I think of this before?*

I spotted the recipe for salsa on Elise Bauer's [Simply Recipes](#), an award-winning blog where she shares family-tested recipes (she took the picture; click on it for her recipe). With just a few ingredients, Elise's salsa allows the cherry flavor to come through and is yummy. I served this meal to friends visiting from Montana, and we all enjoyed it.



**But cherry salsa!** Just the idea of it makes my little foodie mind drool! And I've been riffing on Elise's recipe ever since. Here are some of my suggestions:

- Chop all ingredients my hand (instead of using a food processor) - resulting in a chunky, more robust salsa
- Add a little heat, with jalapeño or Serrano pepper (to taste)
- The recipe calls for red onion, but I use shallots and green onion, too
- Yellow pepper and yellow cherry tomatoes add a savory twist
- Include mint, lemon verbena or a little oregano with the basil
- For pure decadence, add a small amount of crème fraiche, sour cream or mascarpone

Of course, if salsa is not your thing, there's always Cherry Clafouti. I like mine with the brilliant combination of almonds and vanilla. But I digress. Now's the time to enjoy cherries here in the Northwest, and however you like them, they're good for you, too.

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