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Berries (Iagody)

Yvonne Howell

University of Richmond, yhowell@richmond.eduFollow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/mlc-faculty-publications>Part of the [Slavic Languages and Societies Commons](#)

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culinary, medicinal, and cosmetic benefits. *Malina* (raspberry) is used like aspirin to break fevers; *moroshka* (an apricot-coloured swamp berry with sour nectarine taste) is noted for its overall tonic effects; *bnusnika*, *chernika*, and *kliukva* are all similar in tartness and medicinal properties to the American cranberry. The *oblepikha* (sea buckthorn) berry is an orange oblong fruit that grows on a silvery-leaved bush native to the Altai Mountains. It is a prized ingredient in rejuvenating skin creams. Traditional Russian beverages made from berries include the alcoholic *nalichka*, an intensely flavoured berry liqueur; and *mory* and *kisel*, both made from red berries (usually cranberries) that have been boiled in water, filtered, and sweetened to provide a nutritious red juice. *Kisel* is thickened with cornstarch for added bulk, and is remembered now as the ubiquitous drink in Russian daycare, school, and hospital cafeterias. The initial appeal of carbonated, artificially-sweetened Western sodas that flooded the market after the collapse of the USSR has waned somewhat in the second post-Soviet decade, as Russian brands of native berry drinks, such as *mory*, have regained popularity among a new generation of health-conscious consumers. Berry-picking and production are also on the rise as an alternative source of private enterprise in economically depressed rural areas.

See also: drinks, alcoholic; drinks, non-alcoholic; varene

YVONNE HOWELL

berries (iagody)

For centuries the berries that grow in the forests and swamps of northern Russia have been a crucial source of vitamin C, antioxidants, and other micronutrients that would otherwise be lacking in the locally-based diet of most Russians. Berries are gathered during the short sub-Arctic summer, and then preserved for use the year round as *varene* (a thick jam of whole berries), compotes, and raw preserves (fresh fruit ground with sugar). In the more temperate zones of European Russia, strawberries, gooseberries, black and red currants, and other cultivated berries are also important for their