

# Cleo Coyle's Colonial Cranberries

Text & photos (c) 2011 by Alice Alfonsi, who writes the Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini

*I enjoy making this cranberry dish almost every holiday season, whenever those fresh scarlet berries are available in our local grocery.*



The inspiration came from the late Jeff Smith, whose culinary research dug up a passage in John Adams' 18th century journal. Mr. Adams wrote about enjoying a dinner that included wild goose on a spit and cranberries baked in a cast iron skillet in a "slack" oven.

My version uses a handier casserole dish. My sugar choice is light brown for added depth of flavor. Oranges were not so easy to come by in 18th century Massachusetts, but I think orange zest brings a lively bright note to this dish. Orange and cranberry is a fairly common combo in recipes, and I especially like it because professionals in the coffee trade have taught me to look for citrus notes in the best coffees of the world (Ethiopian *Yirgacheffe* and *La Esmeralda Especial* to name two). It also works in this dish.

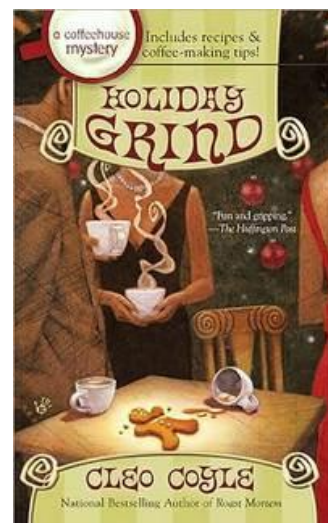


I've served this sweet-tart sauce warm over ice cream, on pancakes in place of syrup, on French toast, over pound cake *a la mode*, and as a kind of loose jam on raisin bread (one of my favorite ways to eat it). It also works well as a sweet chutney complement to spicy Indian meat dishes. The flavor may not be for everyone, but if you're a fan of raspberries and tart berry jams, this may be up your foodie alley. Mr. Adams certainly enjoyed it. I hope you do, too.

***Happy Holidays!***  
***~ Cleo Coyle***

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## Ingredients:

2 cup cranberries, sliced in two  
1 cup light brown sugar (*lightly packed*)  
½ teaspoon orange zest (*zest is grated orange rind with no white pith*)



**Directions:** Place cranberries (sliced in two), light brown sugar, and orange zest into a medium casserole dish. Stir together well. Cover. Bake 1 hour in an oven pre-heated to 250° Fahrenheit. After baking, remove from oven, add 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract. You'll notice some of the sugar will have collected on the bottom. A good stir will fix this and nicely incorporate the final vanilla flavoring.



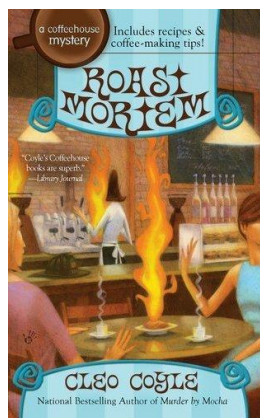
**Flavoring options:** Replace the vanilla with 2 teaspoons almond extract OR 1-2 tablespoons of Amaretto or 1-2 tablespoons of your favorite brandy.

**Serving ideas:** Pour over ice cream, pound cake, French toast, pancakes, apple pie a la mode. Use like a loose jam on a slice of raisin bread, croissants, or slices of toasted French or Italian bread. Serve as a sweet chutney with spicy Indian meat dishes.

**CLEO'S TIPS:** On the casserole dish: I spray mine lightly with nonstick spray to prevent the sugar from sticking. On the cranberries: Be sure to slice the cranberries in two. This may take a few minutes, but you need to expose more of the berry to the sugar and the process of caramelization. On the cooking: Do not try to rush the process. Keep the oven temp low and do the full hour of baking to give the flavors time to develop.

*Eat with Joy! ~ Cleo Coyle*

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