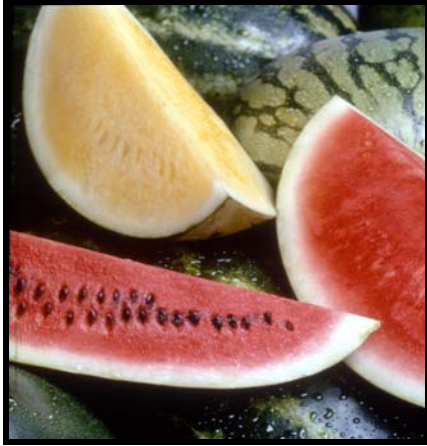


## HARVEST for HEALTH



### It's WATERMELON!

#### Watermelon Facts

- Over 1,200 varieties of watermelon are grown worldwide in 96 countries. About 200-300 varieties are grown in the U.S. and Mexico. Seedless watermelons are the most popular variety for U.S. consumers.
- Watermelon is the fruit of a plant originally from southern Africa. It is a member of the gourd family and is related to the cucumber, squash and pumpkin.
- Early explorers used watermelons as canteens.
- The first cookbook published in the U.S. in 1796 contained a recipe for watermelon rind pickles. In China, watermelon rind is also stir-fried and stewed.
- The 1998 Guinness Book of World Records gives Bill Carson of Arrington, TN, the honor of growing the largest watermelon – 262 pounds.

#### Did You Know?

In one month a watermelon vine can spread as much as 6-8 feet?

#### Nutritional Value

Watermelon is the lycopene leader among fresh fruits and vegetables. Yes, it even contains more available lycopene than fresh tomatoes (15-20 mg per 2-cup serving). Lycopene is an antioxidant that gives watermelon its red color. It also helps neutralize harmful free radicals, which are

implicated in cancer, heart disease, macular degeneration and other age-related illnesses. Watermelon is an excellent source of vitamins A, B6 and C. Consumption increases citrulline and free arginine, which can help maintain cardiovascular function and heart health. And, a two-cup serving has only 80 calories!

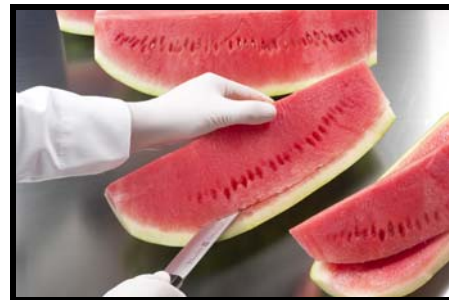
#### Selection

Look for a firm, symmetrical watermelon that is free from bruises, cuts or dents. Lift it up. Watermelon is 92% water, so it should be heavy for its size. The underside should have a creamy yellow spot from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun. If it doesn't have the spot, it may have been picked prematurely and might not be as tasty.

#### Storage & Handling

Compared to most fruits, watermelons need a more "tropical" climate for storage – a thermometer reading of 55 degrees is ideal. However, whole melons will keep for 7-10 days at room temp. Store them too long and they'll lose flavor and texture. Store them too chilly and watermelons develop an off-flavor, become pitted and lose color.

Bacteria can live on the rind of watermelons, so be sure to wash the outside before cutting to keep bacteria from contaminating the flesh inside. Cut watermelon can be covered and refrigerated up to 3-4 days.



#### Add More Watermelon to Your Life

- Make watermelon "cookies" with kids. Use your favorite cookie cutters to cut out shapes of 1/2 – 3/4 inch thick slices of watermelon. Then "frost" with vanilla yogurt and sprinkle with berries or granola.
- Make festive slushes by blending frozen watermelon cubes, frozen raspberries and sparkling water.
- Mix baby greens, watermelon cubes, reduced-fat blue cheese crumbles, candied walnuts and

balsamic vinegar dressing for a sweet and savory salad. Add halved grapes, strawberries or orange slices if desired.

- Try a little Mediterranean flavor – combine watermelon chunks with feta cheese.
- Watermelon mixed with thinly sliced red onion, salt and black pepper makes a great summer salad.
- Add watermelon puree to lemonade and ice for a refreshing drink.
- Serve cooling watermelon chunks as a side dish to balance the flavor or spicy black beans or other fiery Mexican dishes.

### Watermelon Soup

4 cups cubed watermelon, seeds removed  
1/3 c. apple juice  
2 Tbl. lime juice  
1 tsp. fresh mint  
1/2 tsp. chopped ginger

*Puree all ingredients in blender. Blend until smooth. Refrigerate at least one hour before serving. Serves 4. 60 calories; 1g protein; 0.5g fat; 0mg chol; 0mg sodium; 14g carbs; less than 1g fiber.*



### Grilled Spicy Watermelon

1 Tbl. lime zest  
1/4 c. lime juice  
1/4 c. honey, divided  
2 tsp. garlic chili sauce  
pinch of salt  
1 medium sized watermelon  
1 Tbl. fresh chopped cilantro

*Preheat grill to high. In bowl, whisk together lime zest, lime juice, 3 TBL of honey, garlic chili sauce and salt. Cut washed watermelon into 1" wedges. Lightly drizzle each side with remaining honey and place on grill. Grill until just browned, about 2 minutes per side. Place watermelon slices on a plate and drizzle with dressing. Garnish with cilantro. Makes 8-10 servings.*



### Watermelon Sorbet

8 cups cubed watermelon, seeds removed  
1 cup simple syrup (1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup water brought to a boil and cooled)  
2 Tbl. lemon juice

*Puree melon in a blender. Place all ingredients in an ice cream freezer. Freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Serves 12. 70 cal; 1g protein; 0g fat; 0mg chol; 0mg sodium; 16g carbs; less than 1g fiber.*

### Resources

*Remember to look for low-fat recipes, or substitute high-fat ingredients with low-fat options.*

#### Watermelon Recipes & Tips

[www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org)  
[www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)  
[www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)  
[www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)

#### Cancer Nutrition Websites

[www.cancerproject.org](http://www.cancerproject.org)  
[www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)

**Harvest for Health** and **DEFEAT Cancer** are programs of **St. Charles Cancer Treatment Center**. **DEFEAT Cancer** is sponsored by the **Lance Armstrong Foundation** and supported by **Advanced Specialty Care**.

[www.bendcancer.org](http://www.bendcancer.org) & [www.defeatcancer.info](http://www.defeatcancer.info)

*We also thank **St. Charles Food Services – Cafeteria & Deli** for their assistance and support.*

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