

MELONS

Cafeteria | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org

Varieties of Melon

The most common types of melons in grocery stores are honeydew, cantaloupe and watermelon. Aside from the standard pink-fleshed watermelon, other varieties have yellow flesh (like the Early Moonbeam), orange flesh (like the Desert King), or even white flesh (like the White Wonder)!

Muskmelons (such as honeydew and cantaloupe) come in a huge variety as well. Their flesh ranges from white to yellow/orange, to green and their shape can be similar to a cucumber or more oval shaped. Their outside skin can vary from light to dark as well.

Kid-friendly Cooking Tips

- Most kids love melons! Serve chilled pieces/slices for a refreshing summer snack!
- Blend up frozen pieces with a little water and lemon/lime juice for a natural slushy. Or blend raw pieces with the same ingredients and freeze for a tasty popsicle!
- Small chunks are easier for kids to eat than large slices (though slices can be more fun to eat!).
- Slice melon into thin pieces. Then use a cookie cutter to cut melon into fun shapes!

Selection Tips

Some of the smaller melon varieties, like cantaloupe & muskmelon, are very fragrant when ripe and ready. If it smells sweet and musky, then it's good to go. Another way to test: use your knuckle to knock on the skin. If it sounds hollow, it's likely ripe (this method is admittedly less fool-proof). Avoid melons with soft spots.

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.

Tidbit

Muskmelon originated in Southeast Asia, while watermelon is from Southern Africa. They are a delightful and refreshing summertime fruit in the United States.

Mini-activities

- Guess the number of seeds inside a slice of watermelon or in the middle of a cantaloupe.
- Have students guess the weight of different-sized melons.

Storage Tips

1. Cantaloupe & honeydew melons | These will continue to ripen off the vine. So if you have one that doesn't appear to be ripe yet, leave it on the counter, or better yet, place it in a brown paper bag with an apple to speed up the process. If you're only cutting up half, leave the seeds in the un-sliced half and cover with plastic wrap, it will keep better. Store sliced pieces in an airtight container in the fridge.
2. Watermelon | Unlike muskmelons, watermelon will not continue to ripen off the vine. So store them in the refrigerator after purchasing (whole or cut). When you're ready to prepare it, store slices in an airtight container in the fridge. They will keep for a few days once sliced.
3. Any type of melon | If it's a little riper than you prefer, you can freeze the cut up pieces in a Ziplock bag to use in a smoothie (or the sorbet recipe provided in this flyer).

Benefits

Melons are nutritious fruits that have high levels of vitamins A, B6 and C and are high in antioxidants, amino acids and potassium. They also have a high water content, which aids in digestion.

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Recipes

Easy Honeydew Sorbet

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Yield: 64 ¼ cup servings

Ingredients:

- 4 honeydew melons
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup maple syrup or honey

Directions:

1. Slice the honeydew into 1" chunks and spread out on a baking sheet.
2. Put it in the freezer for 4-6 hours until frozen.
3. Once frozen, put the chunks in the blender with the lemon juice and sweetener.
4. You may need to add a couple tablespoons of water to help it to start blending.
5. If you don't have a high-powered blender; you can make this in a food processor.
6. Blend until smooth.
7. Put it back into the freezer for another 30 minutes until it sets.
8. Scoop & serve!



Watermelon Salsa

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Yield: about 10 cups

Ingredients:

- 3 cups diced watermelon
- 3 cups diced cucumbers
- 3 cups diced peppers (any combination of green, orange, yellow or red peppers)
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 ½ cups diced onion
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 3 tablespoons chopped jalapenos (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. After dicing the watermelon, place in a small bowl or cup and drain the juice out. Add to a bowl with chopped onion, cucumbers, peppers, jalapenos (optional), cilantro, lime juice, and black pepper.
2. Mix everything together and taste the salsa. Add salt to taste and additional lime juice and black pepper, if needed.
3. Serve with tortilla chips

Source: *The Gunny Sack*

Cucumber, Melon & Watermelon Salad

Cucumber, Melon and Watermelon Salad

Yield: 48 ¼-cup servings

Ingredients:

- 8 cups mixed diced watermelon, honeydew and cantaloupe
- 4 cups seeded & diced cucumber
- Salt to taste
- 2 teaspoons lemon or lime zest
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 2 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- ½ - 1 teaspoon mild chili powder (to taste), or 1 serrano chile, minced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

1. Combine all of the ingredients in a large bowl. Toss together just before serving.

Source: *New York Times*