

MELONS

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

Tidbit

Melons are part of the Cucurbit family (related to cucumbers, squash & gourds). They originated in Africa & southeast Asia. European settlers reported growing melons in North America as early as 1600. Melons are a great source of Vitamin A and potassium.

Storage Tips

- 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.
- 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.
- 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).

Recipes

Pickled Watermelon Rinds

Yield: about 3 ½ cups

Ingredients:

- 1 4-lb. watermelon, quartered
- 8 cups water
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons coarse salt, divided
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 ¼ cups apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- ½ teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- ½ teaspoon pickling spice
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Directions:

1. Cut watermelon flesh from rind, leaving thin layer of pink on rind (reserve flesh for another use).
2. Cut green outer skin from rind; discard.
3. Cut rind into 1 x 1/2-inch pieces to measure 4 cups.
4. Combine water and 2 tablespoons salt in large pot; bring to boil. Add rind pieces and boil until tender; about 5 minutes. Strain. Transfer rinds to large metal bowl.
5. Combine remaining 2 teaspoons salt, sugar and following 7 ingredients in heavy large saucepan. Bring to boil, stirring until sugar dissolves.
6. Pour over watermelon rinds in bowl. Place plate atop rinds to keep rinds submerged in pickling liquid. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or overnight.
7. Strain liquid from rinds into saucepan; bring to boil. Pour back over rinds. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Repeat straining and boiling of liquid and pour over rinds 1 more time. (Can be made 2 weeks ahead).

Source: *Epicurious*

Kid-friendly eating 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!

Cooking Tips

Melons are tasty & satisfying on their own, but for something new, try tossing them in a salad and pairing with savory items, such as feta, brie cheese, and/or balsamic vinegar.

Selection Tips

Some of the smaller melon varieties, like cantaloupe & muskmelon, are very fragrant when ripe and ready. If it smells sweet and musky, 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.

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Recipes

Easy Honeydew Sorbet

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Yield: 64 ¼ cup servings

Ingredients:

- 1 honeydew melon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons 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

Yield: 3 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 cup diced watermelon
- 1 cup diced cucumbers
- 1 cup diced peppers (any combination of green, orange, yellow or red peppers)
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon 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 and Watermelon Salad

Yield: 4 servings, as a side

Ingredients:

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

Directions:

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

Source: *New York Times*

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Watermelon Salsa