



# MELON

## Healthy Serving Hints

- ◆ Use a melon baller to create a colorful fruit salad
- ◆ Fill the center of a cantaloupe where the seeds were scooped out with yogurt or other fruit
- ◆ Add to smoothies
- ◆ Drizzle with lemon/lime juice to enhance flavors

## Grow Your Own!

1. Plant seeds indoors 21-28 days before planting time (late May). Plantable containers (such as peat pots) are recommended.
2. Transplant seedlings to hills. Each hill should be six to eight inches in height and have at least three to six feet between hills. Start with six seedlings per hill but thin to one or two once plants have successfully been transplanted.
3. Water 1-2 inches per week and enjoy melons in 70-100 days!

## Home Grown History

*Cantaloupe*—The words cantaloupe and muskmelon are frequently used interchangeably. However, muskmelon is a family of melon that includes the cantaloupe, honeydew, and casaba melon. Cantaloupe has been growing since ancient times in the Nile River Valley in Egypt but likely originated near present-day Iran. Cantaloupe was introduced to Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and became a popular fruit due to its sweetness. There are two varieties of muskmelon that is called *cantaloupe*: the U.S. cantaloupe and the European cantaloupe. The U.S. cantaloupe is the most popular type of muskmelon of North America. Today, the majority of crops are produced in California, Arizona, and Texas.



*Watermelon*—The history of watermelon is not well known but it is believed to have originated in Africa. The Moors likely introduced watermelon to Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> century during their rule of the Iberian Peninsula which includes Spain and Portugal. The Spanish then brought watermelon to the America's in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. American Indians are believed to have started cultivating the fruit shortly after that. European colonists also brought seeds with them as they settled in the Americas. By 1629, they were widely grown in Massachusetts. Watermelon popularity in the U.S. is likely due, in large part, to African slaves who would plant them in the cotton fields to enjoy during the hot summer months, while they worked.



## Picking Produce

Look for round melons that are evenly shaped without any bruises or soft spots. Heavier melons tend to be juicier. Ripe cantaloupes have a mildly sweet fragrance. Watermelons should have a firm underside with a yellowish color. Honeydew should be slightly sticky.

## Melon Popsicles

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 cups melon (of any kind), cubed
- 1/2 c plain yogurt (Greek or regular)
- 1 Tbsp lemon or lime juice
- Popsicle molds or paper cups and popsicle sticks
- 1 Tbsp honey

Directions:

1. Puree melon with lemon/lime juice until smooth
2. Add yogurt and honey and blend.
3. Pour mixture into popsicle molds leaving about 1/2 of room at the top. If you do not have popsicle molds, pour mixture into paper cups and place a popsicle stick into the middle of the mixture.
4. Freeze and enjoy.

## Health Benefits

Melons contain up to 94% water! However, don't underestimate the wealth of nutrients that they can pack in that remaining 6%. Just one cup of cantaloupe contains almost a day's worth of your Vitamin C requirement. Vitamin C protects the body from cancer-causing damage, improves iron absorption, and keeps our brain, skin, and bones healthy. Melons are also great sources of Vitamin A, potassium, and fiber, contributing to good vision, proper muscle and nerve function, and improved digestion. These health benefits are provided by a wide variety of melons, including watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe, casaba, and many others.

## Fun Facts

- ◆ By weight, the watermelon is the most common melon consumed in America, followed by the cantaloupe and honeydew.
- ◆ According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest watermelon weighed 262 pounds.
- ◆ Cantaloupe and watermelon are related to summer and winter squash

## How much fruit do I need?

Children 2-3 years	Children 4-8 years	Females 9-18 years	Females 19-30 years	Females 31+ years	Males 9-13 years	Males 14+ years
1 cup	1 to 1 1/2 cups	1 1/2 cups	2 cups	1 1/2 cups	1 1/2 cups	2 cups

The amount of fruit and vegetables you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. These are average recommended daily amounts for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity. Individuals may require more or less than the recommend daily amounts depending on lifestyle and health conditions.



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