

Fruit of the Month

Watermelon



An American favorite for meals and snacks. People can't seem to get enough of the sweet treat, and nutritionists have long appreciated the health benefits watermelon provides. Recently research has shed new light on its potential health benefits. Watermelon contains high concentrations of lycopene, an antioxidant that may help reduce the risks of cancer and other diseases. Watermelon is fat free, nutritionally low in calories and considered an ideal diet food, and is high in energy, making it a great energy boost!

Watermelon, the fruit that is really a Vegetable. Watermelon can be traced back to Africa and is part of the cucumber and squash family. Early watermelons were mainly rind and seeds. Today's varieties are larger, the flesh sweeter, the seeds smaller and the rind thinner. It is perhaps the most refreshing, thirst quenching fruit of all. Watermelon consists of 92% water and 8% sugar, so it is aptly named. Americans eat over 17 lbs of watermelon each year. The largest one on world record (Guinness Book of World Records) weighed 262 pounds.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size (280g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 20g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 19g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 20%	Vitamin C 45%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

When to look for them in your grocery store:

Watermelons are available all year. The natural sweetness of watermelon makes it a favorite anytime of the year. It is a perfect addition to a salad, salsa, or cool drink. Top chunks of sweet watermelon with fruit flavored sherbets or sorbets.

Nutritional Facts:

- Fat-free
- Saturated fat-free
- Very low sodium
- Cholesterol-free
- A good source of vitamin A
- High in vitamin C

Selecting

Choose firm, symmetrical, fruit free of cracks, bruises, soft spots or mold. Ripe watermelon will have a healthy sheen, a dull rind, dried stem, and a buttery yellow underside where it touched the ground. There should be a melon like smell or fragrance. Thump if you must, sound should be dull and hollow. Lift them, weight should be heavy for size.

Special Tip

Avoid watermelons that are very hard, white or very pale green in color on the underside, indicating immaturity. An immature watermelon will be slightly acidic.

Storing

Once picked, watermelon will not ripen easily. If unripe, try putting the whole melon in paper bag un-refrigerated. This sometimes works to ripen them. Watermelons can be kept for short periods of time, up to 2 weeks, uncut at room temperature. Wash watermelon with soap and water before cutting. Once cut, package what is not eaten in closed plastic containers or bags and put back in the refrigerator.

Varieties

There are more than 50 varieties of watermelon. Most have red flesh, but there are orange and yellow-fleshed varieties. Of the 50 varieties of watermelon throughout the United States, there are four general categories: Allsweet, Ice-Box, Seedless and Yellow Flesh.

Allsweet

- 20-25 pounds
- Red Flesh
- Oblong
- Dark green rind, with or without stripes



Serving suggestion: Surprise your guests by serving a large refreshing wedge of watermelon following a heavy meal. Place the wedge on a plate with a large knife and encourage the entire table to enjoy a slice.

Ice-Box

- 5-15 pounds
- Red or yellow flesh
- Round
- Dark or light green rind



Serving suggestion: Make your salsa or relish really "cool" by substituting watermelon for tomatoes in your favorite recipe. Serve with grilled chicken, fish or pork. Try watermelon salsa with chips, too.

Seedless

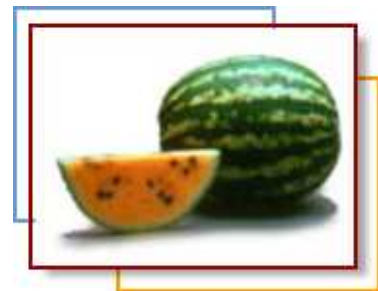
- 10-25 pounds
- Red or yellow flesh
- Oval to round
- Light green rind with dark green stripes



Serving suggestion: This variety's perfect for sorbets and beverages. Blend cubes of seedless watermelon and use the juice in margaritas, daiquiris or lemonade for a new twist.

Yellow Flesh

- 10-30 pounds
- Yellow to bright orange flesh
- Oblong to long
- Light green rind with mottled stripes



Serving suggestion: Use for color variety as a garnish or side dish. Create festive fruit kabobs by skewering yellow flesh watermelon with other seasonal fruits, such as kiwis and strawberries.

Make Watermelon Part of Your 5 A Day Plan



Keep watermelon chunks, slices or juice in your refrigerator. Pack a slice in your lunch box. Use as a snack or thirst quencher. Combine with other fruit or vegetables to use as an appetizer, in fresh fruit salad or as a dessert. Scoop out fruit and cut rind like a basket for an even prettier fruit salad.

Recipes

Watermelon Bits

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health

1 cup fresh lime juice

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp hot-pepper sauce

6 cup watermelon, seeded



In a small bowl suitable for dipping, stir together lime juice, salt, and hot pepper sauce; adjust seasoning to taste. Place bowl in center of large platter, arrange watermelon around bowl, and serve with wooden picks.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 60, Protein 1g, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 9%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 15g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 165mg.

Caribbean Watermelon Salsa

Makes 8 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/National Watermelon Promotion Board

2 cups watermelon, chopped and seeded

1 cup fresh pineapple, chopped

1 cup onion, chopped

1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

1/4 cup orange juice

1 Tbsp jerk seasoning

In large bowl, combine all ingredients; mix well. Refrigerate, covered, at least one hour to blend flavors. Stir before serving.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 33, Protein 1g, Fat 0g, Calories From Fat 7%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 8g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 2mg.

Watermelon Smoothie

Makes 2 servings

Each serving equals two 5 A Day servings

Source: Produce for Better Health

2 cups watermelon, seeded chunks

1 cup ice, cracked

1/2 cup plain non-fat yogurt

1 Tbsp sugar

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/8 tsp almond extract

Combine all ingredients in blender container, blend until smooth.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 100, Protein 4g, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 6%, Cholesterol 1mg, Carbohydrates 22g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 42mg.

Watermelon Pico de Gallo

Makes 12 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/National Watermelon Promotion Board



4 cups watermelon, diced and seeded

1-1/2 cups jicama, diced

1/2 cup green pepper, diced

1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

1 Tbsp jalapeno pepper, chopped

2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 Tbsp honey

1 tsp salt

1 tsp garlic pepper

1/4 tsp hot-pepper sauce

In large bowl, combine all ingredients; mix well. Refrigerate, covered, at least one hour to blend flavors. Stir before serving.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 30, Protein 1g, Fat 0g, Calories From Fat 7%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 7g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 185mg.

Watermelon Blueberry Banana Split

Makes 2 servings

Each serving equals one three 5 A Day servings

Recipe Source: Produce for Better Health/National Watermelon Promotion Board

2 large bananas

8 watermelon "scoops" — a watermelon ball created with an ice cream scoop.

2 cups blueberries, fresh

1/2 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

1/4 cup low-fat granola

Peel bananas and cut in half crosswise, then cut each piece in half lengthwise. For each serving, lay 2 banana pieces against the sides of a shallow dish. Place a watermelon "scoop" at each end of the dish. Fill the center space with blueberries. Stir yogurt until smooth, spoon over watermelon "scoops." Sprinkle with granola

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 370, Protein 7g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 9%, Cholesterol 2mg, Carbohydrates 84g, Fiber 9g, Sodium 57mg.

South-of-the-Border

Watermelon Walla-Walla Sweet Onion Salsa

Makes 4 (1/2-cup) servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

2 cups watermelon, chopped, seeds removed

3/4 cup Walla Walla Sweet Onion, chopped

3/4 cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained

1/4 cup jalapeño chilies, chopped, seeded

1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

1 large clove garlic, finely chopped

1 Tbsp brown sugar

1/2 tsp salt

Stir together all ingredients in bowl. Refrigerate, covered at least 1 hour to blend flavors. Stir before serving.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 91, Protein 3g, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 4%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 21g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 0mg.