

# BUY FRESH - BUY LOCAL

## Food of the Week: Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe is one of the popular melons consumed in the United States. Although referred to as a cantaloupe, the cantaloupe in the United States is in fact a muskmelon. The true cantaloupe exists in Europe and has a rough and warty surface unlike the netted characteristics found in the United States.

In the United States, cantaloupes are primarily grown in California, Arizona, and Texas with the peak season being June through August. However, the fruit is available year around in most grocery stores.

Cantaloupes are planted in February and can be grown in 60°F, yet the optimal temperature is 85-90°F. Pollination of the plant depends on bees, thus conditions such as rain, wind, cold, and cloudiness which are unfavorable for bees can decrease the crop yield. The melons are harvested by hand when the fruit will cleanly separate from the vine sometime in June through October. Harvest occurs 8 to 10 times every 10 to 14 days and the melons are separated by size to be shipped in boxes. Immediately after harvest the fruits needs to be cooled to maximize post harvest life. This is done by pressure cooling, which allows for storage up to 2 weeks at 34°F to 40°F.

### Shopping and storing

When shopping for a cantaloupe one should consider the following, the shape, the color, and the stem end. First, the melon should have a spherical and uniform appearance without bruises and indentations. Second, when ripe it should have a khaki colored skin, not green. Finally, there should be a smooth stem end without any signs of any tear. This indicates that the melon was not harvested too early.

Once cantaloupes are harvested it cannot further produce sugar. Therefore, leaving the melon on the counter at room temperature will not make the melon sweeter, but it will turn softer and juicier. However, do not leave the cantaloupe at room temperature for more than 4 days. Once ripe or cut, the melon should be refrigerated and consumed within 2 days.

### Nutrition Facts

Cantaloupe is related to squash and has a nutrient value between that of summer and winter squash. Its orange flesh is rich in beta-carotene and provides potassium and vitamin C. In addition, cantaloupe has high water contents and is good to consume on hot days to help staying hydrated.

Nutrients per 1 cup of raw cantaloupe: calories: 56, fat: 0 g, carbohydrate: 13 g, protein: 1.0 g, fiber: 1.0 g, sodium: 14 mg, potassium: 494 mg, vitamin C: 68 mg, vitamin A: 515 RE or 5158 IU, water: 144 g

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## Recipe of the Week: California Summer Salad

### California Summer Salad

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Makes 4 servings

#### *Ingredients:*

- 1 container (8 oz) nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 T thawed orange juice concentrate
- 2 T fresh basil, chopped or 2 t dried basil leaves
- 1 T honey
- 1 head (small) Iceberg lettuce, cut into 8 wedges
- 8 apricots, fresh, halved and pits removed
- 1 pt strawberries, fresh
- 1 cantaloupe, seeded, sliced, and rind removed
- 1/4 c shelled and chopped natural pistachios

#### *Preparation:*

To make the dressing: in a bowl whisk yogurt, orange juice concentrate, basil, and honey. To assemble salad: on individual serving plates (or on platter) arrange remaining ingredients, dividing equally. Serve dressing on the side.

Nutritional information per serving: calories: 250, carbohydrate: 48 g, protein: 9 g, fat: 5 g, cholesterol: 1 mg, fiber: 8 g, sodium: 66 mg, potassium: 1264 mg, vitamin A: 688 RE, vitamin C: 131 mg

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