

BUY FRESH - BUY LOCAL

Food of the Week: Watermelon

Going back 5000 years to the ancient history of Egypt, watermelons played an important role in the burial tombs of kings to nourish them in the afterlife. The watermelon originated from the Kalahari Desert of Africa and then made its way along the Mediterranean Sea and by the 10th century it could be found in China. Today the U.S. is the fourth ranked country in the world growing watermelons with 44 states growing the fruit, predominantly in Florida, Texas, California, Georgia, and Arizona.

Watermelons are grown in rows in sand or sandy loams. Bees pollinate the watermelon plant and one month later a vine is produced. A melon is produced and is ready to be harvested within 90 days. The harvest is done by hand due to the watermelon's fragile surface. The peak production occurs in May, June, July, and August, but watermelons can be found from April through November.

There are many varieties of watermelons and 1200 varieties are grown worldwide. In the United States, about 200-300 varieties can be found of which 50 are popular.

How do you choose a watermelon?

- The watermelon should be firm and free from bruises, cuts, and dents.
- Watermelons consist of 92% water. Therefore, the watermelon should weigh from 5-30 lbs.
- A creamy yellow spot indicates the area where the watermelon was sitting on the ground and was ripening in the sun.

Nutrition Facts per 1 cup: calories: 51, carbohydrates: 11.5 g, protein: 1 g, fat: <1 g, cholesterol: 0 mg, fiber: <1 g, sodium: 3 mg, potassium: 186 mg, vitamin A: 59 RE, vitamin C: 15 mg

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**Recipe of the Week:
Watermelon, Melon, and Almond
Salad**

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 3 T fresh lime juice
- 1 t white sugar
- 1 t minced fresh ginger root
- 1/8 c vegetable oil
- 2 bunches watercress, trimmed and chopped
- 2 1/2 c cubed watermelon
- 2 1/2 c ripe cantaloupe cubes
- 1/3 c toasted and sliced almonds

Preparation

In a large bowl, whisk together lime juice, sugar, and ginger. Gradually add oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add watercress, watermelon, and cantaloupe to dressing and toss to coat. Transfer salad to plates, sprinkle with sliced almonds and serve immediately.

Nutritional Information per serving: calories: 235, carbohydrates: 20 g, fat: 14 g, protein: 4 g, fiber: 3 g, cholesterol: 0 mg, sodium: 54 mg, potassium: 548 mg, vitamin A: 396 RE, vitamin C: 58 mg

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