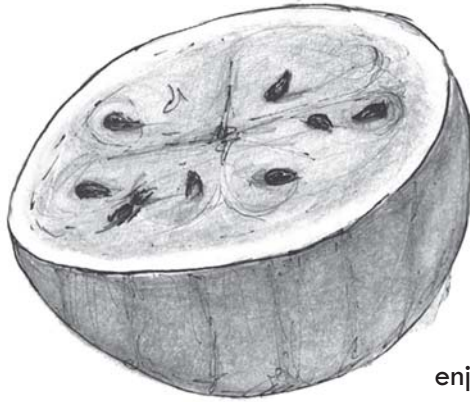


WATERMELON



WATERMELON is about 90% water, so it is aptly named. Every part of the watermelon is edible, even the seeds and rinds. This refreshing fruit is filled with many nutrients that benefit our health. Look for watermelons in the Northeast during the summer. Watermelon is also good in recipes, but it might be best enjoyed just the way it is!



SELECTION

- ◆ Choose a symmetrical watermelon that is **heavy** for its size.
- ◆ **Avoid** melons with **soft spots, gashes, or other blemishes** on the rind.
- ◆ The rind should be **dull and just barely yield to pressure**.

STORAGE

- ◆ Keep watermelons in the **refrigerator** because heat causes the flesh to dry out and become fibrous. Refrigerated watermelon should keep for up to **3 weeks**.
- ◆ **Cut** melon should be **wrapped in plastic and refrigerated** for up to **3 days**.

Nutritional Information

A wedge of watermelon provides 25% of the vitamin C, 20% the of vitamin A, 8% of the fiber, and 7% of the potassium recommended daily. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Fiber appears to reduce the risk of developing various conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, diverticular disease, and constipation. Diets containing foods that are a good source of potassium and that are low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. The phytochemicals abundant in watermelon are lycopene, beta carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin. They may help prevent some types of cancer and heart disease as well as maintain a healthy immune system.

Watermelon Recipes

Watermelon Smoothie (Serves 2-3)

2 cups watermelon chunks, seeded
1 cup crushed ice
1/2 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon almond extract
sugar to taste

Combine all ingredients in blender. Blend until smooth; about 30 seconds. Serve immediately.

Recipe contributed by Lori Wyble, Just Food dietetic intern, 2003



Pickled Watermelon Rinds

Rinds of 1 small watermelon, green part removed
1 quart vinegar
1 quart water
2 pounds sugar
1 teaspoon whole cloves
1 teaspoon whole allspice
3-4 cinnamon sticks
1 lemon sliced thin

Soak the rinds overnight in salt water (1/4 cup salt to 1 quart water). Drain off the brine and cook the rind in fresh water until tender. Drain. Put the spices in cheese cloth and tie up so that it is a little spice bag. In a pot on the stove, combine the water, vinegar, sugar, lemon, and spices. When the mixture is hot, add the rinds and boil until the rind is clear and the syrup is a little thick. Put in sterilized jars and seal. (See canning tip sheet for more instructions on canning and preserving fruit).

Recipe adapted from thefruitpages.com, copyright The Fruit Pages 2002.



Watermelon Popsicles (Serves 4)

4 cups watermelon cubes, seeded
4 7 oz. paper cups
4 Popsicle sticks

Puree watermelon in blender. Pour into paper cups. Place sticks in cups and freeze until firm. To eat, tear paper cup from the frozen pop.

Recipe adapted from www.watermelon.org

