



Produce of the  
Month

# Watermelon

**Welcome!** Spring is blooming all around the country, and with the warmer weather, folks start looking for their favorite, refreshing summer treats. Without a doubt, watermelon is the epitome of a great summer snack, full of juicy flavor, not to mention a bucket-load of excellent nutrition. Watermelons are related to cucumbers and squash and trace back their history to the ancient Egyptians who held watermelon in such high regard that they frequently placed it in the tombs of kings.

Today watermelon is enjoyed all around the world and has become a quintessential American favorite, served in chunks, slices, or as juice. Millions of watermelon lovers can't be wrong, so enjoy some of that delicious thirst-quenching fruit today!

Sources: WHFoods.com, FoodReference.com

## Watermelon Goodness for Your Taste Buds.. and your Body!

There are 200-300 different varieties of watermelon which fall into four general categories: Allsweet, Ice-Box, Seedless and Yellow Flesh. Regardless of which one you choose as your favorite, they all offer an abundance of vitamins and nutrients, as well as an antioxidant that's been garnering a lot of attention lately, that being lycopene!

One wedge of watermelon (approximately 1/16 of a melon) provides more than a third of recommended daily allowance of Vitamins A and C, along with plenty of potassium, magnesium and even some calcium. The lycopene in watermelons, like that found in tomatoes and tomato products, has been shown in many studies to reduce the risk of a wide variety of cancers. So next time you're wearing a big grin on your face while enjoying a slice of watermelon, you can feel extra good knowing that your fighting hard against cancer!



Sources: NutritionData.com, WHFoods.com, FoodReference.com

## A Tasty Treat To Try At Home

### Watermelon Popsicles

- 2 1/2 cups** seedless watermelon chunks
- 1/3 cup** orange juice
- 1/4 cup** sugar
- 8** Popsicle Sticks

#### METHOD

1. Cut the watermelon into small chunks.
2. Pour the chunks into a blender.
3. Add the orange juice and sugar to blender.
4. Puree the mixture really well!
5. Pour the watermelon puree into paper cups.
6. Place the cups in the freezer for half an hour.
7. After the popsicles have frozen for half an hour, cover each cup with aluminum foil.
8. Poke a popsicle stick through the center of each foil top.
9. Place the cups back in the freezer until completely frozen this will take approximately 2 hours.
10. When you are ready to eat, peel the cup off the frozen watermelon.
11. Enjoy!
12. Extras may be kept frozen for up to 1 month.





## The Story Behind Watermelons

Watermelons are thought to have been first cultivated in Egypt almost 5,000 years ago and became popular there and in the Mediterranean region because water was often scarce and watermelons could always be counted on to quench thirst. Watermelons made their way to China sometime during the 10th century and spread throughout Europe by the 13th century. It is believed watermelons eventually arrived in North America not with European settlers, but African slaves.

Today, much of the world's supply of watermelon comes from China, but the U.S. is one of many other countries with a significant

watermelon crop. One of the most popular types of watermelon grown today is the seedless variety, which is created through a multi-step cross-breeding process that first requires watermelons with two chromosomes to be cross-bred with watermelons with four chromosomes. This creates a watermelon that contains "triploid" seeds that, when planted, produce watermelons with very small seeds that are incapable of reproducing. Seedless watermelons are not actually free of seeds though...they contain small, rudimentary seeds called "pips" that are eaten along with the fruit!

Sources: National Watermelon Promotion Board, National Science Foundation

## Notable Quotable

"The true Southern watermelon is a boon apart, and not to be mentioned with commoner things. It is chief of this world's luxuries, king by the grace of God over all the fruits of the earth. When one has tasted it, he knows what the angels eat."

- Mark Twain

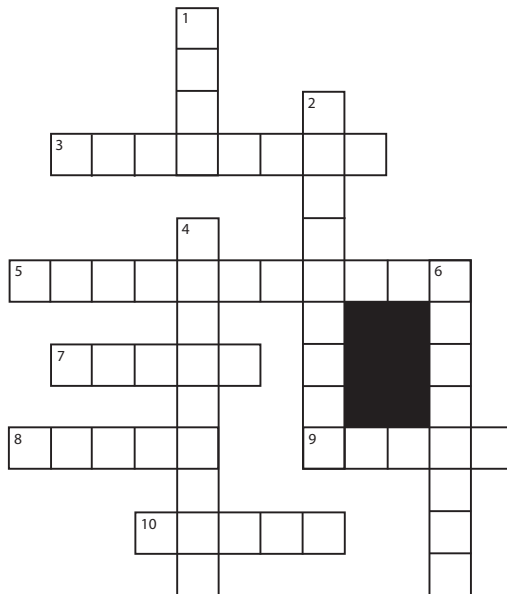
## Did You Know That ...

- Watermelons are 92% water!
- In terms of weight, the watermelon is the most consumed melon in the United States.
- The very first cookbook published in the United States (1796) included a recipe for watermelon rind pickles.
- The largest watermelon on record was grown in Tennessee and weighed 262 pounds!
- Despite being a fruit, watermelon is the official state vegetable of Oklahoma.
- Watermelon rind is edible.
- In China, stir-fried, stewed and pickled watermelon is popular.
- Watermelon is free of fat and cholesterol and is surprisingly low in calorie content.

Sources: National Watermelon Promotion Board, WHFoods, FoodReference.com

## Watermelon Crossword

The answers to each of the questions below can be found in the adjacent crossword puzzle. Answer each question to figure out which word belongs where.



### Across

- Watermelons fall into four general categories: Ice-Box, Seedless, Yellow Flesh and what?
- Watermelon has no fat nor what?
- Ninety-two percent of a watermelon is made of what?
- Much of the world's supply of watermelons come from this country.
- The first watermelons are thought to have been cultivated in this modern-day African nation.
- This is what the inside of a watermelon is called.

### Down

- The small, rudimentary seeds in seedless watermelons are called what?
- The largest watermelon on record was grown in what U.S. state?
- In Oklahoma, watermelon is the state what?
- Watermelons contain a large amount of this cancer-fighting antioxidant.

Watermelon Crossword Answers  
 Across: 3: Allsweet, 5: Cholesterol, 7: Water, 8: China, 9: Egypt, 10: Flesh  
 Down: 1: Pips, 2: Tennessee, 4: Vegetable, 6: Lycopene



## For More Information

For more information about watermelon, please contact:

National Watermelon Promotion Board  
 National Science Foundation  
 WHFoods