

HARVEST OF THE MONTH

WATER- MELONS

SEPTEMBER

Watermelon has a smooth hard rind, usually green with dark green stripes or yellow spots. It also has a juicy, sweet inside that is deep red to pink, but sometimes orange, yellow, or white, with many seeds. Seedless watermelons are also available.

STORAGE

- Watermelon stored at 50-60 °F with a relative humidity of 90% will be acceptable for up to 3 weeks.
- Watermelons held in dry storage below 75 °F will have approximate shelf life of up to 10 days. If dry storage temperatures are above 75 °F, shelf life will decline to 5 days.
- At temperatures between 32 and 45 °F, watermelons are subject to chilling injury that may result in pitting, off-flavors, and color loss.
- Watermelons may become mushy and shelf life may be reduced when exposed to ethylene gas-producing fruit such as apples, stone fruits, and grapes.
- Store watermelons at 41 °F or below for up to 24 hours prior to cutting to reduce the amount of time it takes cut melon to cool to 41 °F.
- Whole melons with visible signs of decay or damaged rinds (such as mechanical damage or cracking) have an increased risk of containing harmful bacteria.
- Cover, date, and refrigerate cut watermelon. Use by the following day for best quality.
- Hold and serve watermelon at 41 °F. Do not store cut watermelon at room temperature. If possible, display cut melons in a refrigerated case, not just on top of ice. Take and record serving line temperatures.
 - Discard cut watermelon after 2 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F to 135 °F).



+ BENEFITS

Watermelons are mostly water — about 92%— and are a very good source of vitamin A and vitamin C. Watermelons also contain a high level of lycopene, which helps to protect against heart disease and cancer.

Talking to Students about Vitamin C

Vitamin C supports maintenance of collagen, protects against infection and helps in iron absorption.

✓ SELECTION

- Make sure the watermelon is firm, symmetrical and free of severe bruises.
- Some minor scratches are okay — the purpose of the melon's thick rind is to protect the contents inside.
- Ripe watermelons should also be dark green in color.
- A healthy, ripe watermelon should be fairly heavy for its size.
- Turn your watermelon over and note whether the bottom has a yellowish spot (also called "the ground spot"). This is where the watermelon sat on the ground while sitting in the sun at the farm. If this spot is white or greenish, your watermelon may have been picked too soon and might not be as ripe as it should be.

PREPARATION

- Wash the outer surface of the watermelon thoroughly under cool, running tap water. Scrub melons with a clean produce brush before cutting. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.

🍴 TASTING TIP

Try offering children one new food at a time.



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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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