



# WATERMELON

*Nobody can resist a sweet, juicy watermelon on a hot summer day...*

## Growing Tips

- Watermelons love sunny days and warm temps, so it's best to find a spot in the garden that gets lots of sun.
- Be sure to give plants plenty of space! Leaving 3-4 feet between plants will ensure the vines have room to grow.
- Since **water**melons are 92% water, it's important to keep the plants well watered. Avoid watering the leaves, excess moisture could promote fungus.
- Once fruit begins to form, keep the melon from direct contact with the soil. Place ripening melon on a bed of straw or cardboard to prevent rot.

## When are they ripe?

There are a lot of theories on testing a watermelon's ripeness, one common way relies on the fruit's colors. The spot where the watermelon touches the ground (or cardboard!) will change from a pale white to a bright yellow when the fruit is ripe. The green rind will also shift from a shiny green to a more dull color.

The watermelon on the right is fully ripe whereas the melon on the left isn't quite ripe yet. The yellow color indicates the watermelon is ready to be picked and will have a sweet, rich flavor.



## Mix it Up!

Not surprisingly, July is National Watermelon Month. But don't be afraid to enjoy watermelon in different ways all summer long!

Make watermelon the star of your summer BBQ fruit salad



Photo Credit: Accidental Happy Baker; SpicySouthernKitchen; Taste & Tell; Betsy Hite; thegunnysack



Diced watermelon gives your homemade salsa a sweet kick

Freeze watermelon cubes to add a sweet flavor to water or lemonade



Toss some watermelon into your favorite salad with some berries, tomatoes and greens

Watermelon fruit pizza! top your slice with yogurt and your other favorite fruits



## Watermelon Leather

You've heard of fruit leather, but did you ever think of making watermelon leather?! Try this healthier twist on a popular snack!

### Ingredients:

- 10 Cups Diced Watermelon

### Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 170degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper
- Blend all of the watermelon chunks in a food processor. Pour the blended watermelon into a mesh colander lined with a cheesecloth to drain out the excess liquid.
- Evenly spread the watermelon puree onto the center of the baking sheet using a spatula so that it is approximately 1/4 inch thick.
- Bake the watermelon for 6-8 hours, rotating the pan every hour.
- The Watermelon Fruit Leather is done baking when it is no longer shiny & has a matte appearance, it will also no longer be super sticky. Let cool completely.
- Carefully lift the parchment paper and fruit leather off the baking sheet & lay it on a cutting board. Using a knife, scissors or a pizza cutter, cut the leather into strips 1-2 inches wide.
- Roll the strips of fruit leather up and they will keep in the fridge for about a week.
- Don't throw out those drained juices! Add it to smoothies or make a fruit syrup!

Recipe Credit: Domestically Blissful



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