

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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Late summer is peak season for melons, so now's the time to dig in. You'll get the best tasting, sweetest, juiciest and - in case you care the most nutritious - melons this month. If the only one you regularly eat is watermelon, that's fine. Go right ahead and eat watermelon. But consider expanding your taste and color variety too. There are lots of other kinds to choose from these days.

One of the biggest complaints about watermelons has long been that they are just too big. When the smallest ones in the store were enough for 15 people many singles or couples wouldn't buy one because they couldn't eat it all. But now that's not a good excuse. There are 'singles' sizes, little mini-melons that even a single person could finish in two days. Most of them are seedless too, so not liking seeds is not an excuse either.

Besides being one of the best thirst-quenchers for a hot summer day, watermelons have nutrients. Water certainly, and sugar to make them taste so delicious. But add in that bright red color, lycopene and beta-carotene, and now we're talking eyesight and memory. A cup of ripe watermelon has more of these nutrients than a whole tomato has! Both are tied to reducing our risk of macular degeneration, a very common cause of vision loss in the elderly, and to keeping our memories sharp.

Take Grandmother a watermelon for her birthday instead of a cake!

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If watermelon really is not to your liking, try a different melon. If you want a little one look for a Sprite. It's only about the size of a grapefruit. The flesh is creamy white but what it lacks in color it makes up for in taste. It's one of the sweetest, and the flavor is a mixture of honeydew and pear.

Cantaloupes are slightly larger, enough for 2 to 4 people. It's another familiar one, with sweet orange flesh and that rough, netted-looking skin. Finely diced cantaloupe can be mixed with diced red onion, enough jalapeño pepper to suit your taste, a bit of sugar and vinegar for a fresh salsa to serve with grilled chops. To make it an extra special dessert treat put a scoop of vanilla ice cream in the center of each wedge. Delicious!

Honeydews and Galias are larger than cantaloupes, enough for 4 to 8 people each. Honeydew have smooth pale green-to-white skins and green flesh. Galias have a smooth yellow skin and pale green flesh inside. Both tend to be sweeter than cantaloupes. They can be eaten alone, diced into fruit salads or threaded onto skewers to serve a fruit kabobs. Add a vanilla yogurt sauce and a touch of toasted coconut to make them special.

One last sweet fruity melon to try is a Crenshaw. These can be as large as a watermelon, so plan a party when you get one. The skin on a Crenshaw should be dark yellow to pale green. They're not as smooth as a honeydew but don't have netting like cantaloupes do. The flesh is salmon pink and the flavor has a touch of spiciness to it.

How do you choose a good ripe melon? They should feel heavy for their size. They should be firm but not rock hard. If you're a thumper, give it a light knock with your knuckle. It should have a dull hollow sound to it. Melons other than watermelons

should have a little bit of 'give' around the spot where the blossom came off, and if you take a sniff they should smell sweet and melon-y. Finally, look for the pale spot where the fruit sat on the ground. If there is no spot the fruit probably isn't ripe yet. If a watermelon's spot is bright yellow, it has been sunburned. Pick another.

One last, important point - food safety. They probably picked up bacteria while they were sitting on the ground getting sweet and juicy. So be sure to wash all melons before you cut them. And keep all cut fruit, from watermelons to apples, refrigerated. Bacteria will grow if they're at room temperature.

Here's an unusual recipe, a cantaloupe cream pie. You could use honeydew or Galia for a green pie. Try it and see how many people can identify the flavor!

#### Cantaloupe Cream Pie

1 baked 8" pie shell	1 Cup sugar
2 Tbsp flour	3 eggs, beaten lightly
1 Cup pureed cantaloupe or other melon	1 tsp vanilla extract
2 Tbsp butter or margarine	whipped topping optional

Combine sugar and flour in saucepan. Add eggs and mix well. Add fruit puree and stir. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, 8 - 10 minutes until mixture boils and thickens. Remove from heat. Stir in butter and vanilla. Cool in refrigerator. Pour into pie shell. Top with whipped topping if desired or other garnish. Chill until served.

Serves 6 - 8.