



By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

If choosing a watermelon was like buying a used car, you'd check under the hood—unlikely your produce monger is going to let that happen! So instead, shoppers have resorted to a thumping ritual that's about as helpful as kicking a tire. No amount of thumping, tapping, sniffing, or shaking will give you reliable information about a melon's ripeness. So, what's the best way to pick out a tasty one?

Check these 3 things:

1. Look for rind (skin) that is firm and green with yellow undertones and waxy bloom (dull rather than shiny appearance).
2. Next, turn it over and look at the patch on its underside—you want it to be creamy yellow (in this case, green and white are not desirable). Watermelons stop ripening as soon as they are plucked from the vine. The yellow spot is a sign that is sat on the ground while ripening in the sun.
3. Now pick it up. A juicy watermelon will be heavy for its size.

Seedless melons are not actually seedless, it's just that their seeds are small and underdeveloped. Seedless varieties outsell seeded watermelons even though the seeded varieties are a better bargain, weighing in at 15 to 45 pounds each as compared to 10 to 20 pounds for a seedless melon. Taste comparisons have them in a dead heat.

Take your watermelon home and place it on the countertop. A few days at room temperature seems to enhance flavor and increases lycopene and beta-carotene (antioxidants) content. Once you cut the melon, it needs to be refrigerated. Leave it in its rind and cover it with plastic wrap. Or cut it up and store it in a covered bowl. To avoid water-logged fruit, place the cut pieces in a colander inside the bowl.

Try this month's recipe. Or cut some chunks to add color to a mixed fruit salad. Still, eating it simply as slices, letting the juice run down your arm is truly a joy of summer!

RECIPE for health

JULY 2019

featured food:

WATERMELON

Watermelon Salsa

By Executive Chef Dien Ly, Residential and Hospitality Services

Makes 6 cup

- 4 c medium dice watermelon
- 1/4 c small dice yellow onion
- 1/4 - 1/2 c small dice fresh jalapeno pepper (if you like heat, keep some of the seeds and veins)
- 1 c small dice green bell pepper
- 2 t chopped cilantro (Not a fan of cilantro? Switch it with basil or parsley)
- 1 t kosher salt

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix well. Chill the salsa until serving time. Serve with tortilla chips or pita chips.

This salsa can be made a day ahead and refrigerated.

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