


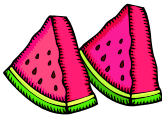


Harvest of the Month (HOTM) Food Facts August 2009 ~ Melons



				Friday
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	
<p>4 In 1990, Bill Carson of Arrington, Tennessee grew the largest watermelon at 262 pounds that is still on the record books (1998 ed. Guinness Book of World Records).</p>	<p>5 Christopher Columbus brought over the first melon seeds to North America on his second expedition.</p> 	<p>6 California leads the nation in both cantaloupe and honeydew production – producing more than 70% of the nation’s crop – and ranks fourth in watermelon production.</p>	<p>7 By weight, the watermelon is the most common melon consumed in America, followed by the cantaloupe and honeydew melon.</p>	<p>1 Watermelon is thought to have originated in the Kalahari Desert of Africa. The first recorded watermelon harvest occurred nearly 5,000 years ago in Egypt and is depicted in Egyptian hieroglyphics on walls of their ancient buildings.</p>
<p>11 Introduced to western and northern Europe during the Middle Ages, melons were harvested by the Spaniards and later the French and British.</p>	<p>12 Melons were first cultivated in Persia and northern Africa nearly 4,000 years ago, and later by ancient Greeks and Romans.</p>	<p>13 Watermelon contains high concentrations of lycopene, an antioxidant that may help reduce the risks of cancer and other diseases.</p>	<p>14 The combined total value of the State’s cantaloupe, honeydew and watermelon crops exceeds \$217 million.</p>	<p>8 The cantaloupe, actually called a muskmelon is a familiar fruit with orange flesh and khaki netted colored skin provides the most beta-carotene in the entire melon family.</p>
<p>18 Most people don’t know that melons are in the same gourd family as squashes and cucumbers. So what’s the difference between melons and squashes? It’s the way that they are used. Squashes are considered vegetables, while melons are known as fruits.</p>	<p>19 The major growing regions for melons include the Central Valley (Sacramento, Stanislaus, Kern, Fresno, Kings, Merced and Tulare counties); and the southern desert valley (Imperial and Riverside counties).</p>	<p>20 Melons are a warm-weather annual plant sensitive to cold temperatures at any stage of growth. In fact, seeded melons germinate best under hotter temperatures, up to 95 F, and can tolerate temperatures in excess of 100 F.</p>	<p>21 There are more than 50 varieties of watermelon. Most have red flesh, but there are orange and yellow-fleshed varieties. Of the 50 varieties of watermelon throughout the United States, there are four categories: Allsweet, Ice-Box, Seedless and Yellow Flesh.</p>	<p>15 On average, it takes about 10 to 15 bee visits for proper pollination to grow melons.</p> 
<p>25 In California, melons go to market beginning in May with a continuous supply through October, peaking in July and August.</p> 	<p>26 In general, melons should be shaped according to their variety. You should look for a clean and smooth break at the stem and for the most mature melons have a fruity fragrance (if not chilled).</p>	<p>27 Melons are vine-like herb plants of the Cucurbit family that bear an accessory fruit known as a false berry. The fruit is actually called <i>muskmelon</i> because of its odor when ripe, but over the years this has been shortened to <i>melon</i>.</p>	<p>28 Watermelon is perhaps the most refreshing, thirst quenching fruit of all. It consists of 92% water and 8% sugar, so it is appropriately named.</p> 	<p>22 Melons grow best when planted on raised beds spaced every 12 inches, in rows spaced four to six feet apart. Due to their large size, melons are normally hand-harvested when ripe at the “full-slip” stage, when the fruit easily separates from the vine with slight pressure.</p>
				<p>29 Melons rank in the top 30 among California’s commodity exports at a value of about \$40 million. The cantaloupe is the predominant variety grown – accounting for more than half of all California grown melons.</p>



Nutrition Connections Made Easy



Harvest of the Month-it's more than taste testing

Your students have the opportunity to sample a different fruit or vegetable each month. Teachers share creative ways to integrate HOTM into the curriculum.

Language Arts

~ Vocabulary development (especially adjectives) ~ Writing Prompts ~ Poetry about fruits and vegetables ~ Similes ~ Songs

Geography

~ Map where a fruit or vegetable originated or grows ~ Connect to agriculture in California.

Math

~ Graph fruit or vegetable preferences ~ Compare two different fruits or vegetables with Venn diagrams ~ Fractions ~ Calculate the mean, median, and mode.

English Language Learning

~ Vocabulary development ~ Teach comparatives and superlatives ~ Compare two fruits or vegetables, state which you prefer, and two reasons why.

Art

~ Draw or paint the fruit/vegetable of the month. Ask your cafeteria manager if you can display them in the cafeteria.

Health

~ Learn about the nutrients in the HOTM fruit or vegetable and how they help our bodies stay healthy.

Provided by Ventura Unified School District

Vitamin A

- Needed for healthy growth
- Helps you see in the dark
- Helps keep your skin healthy
- Helps you fight sickness

Vitamin C

- Helps heal cuts and wounds
- Helps you fight sickness
- Helps keep your teeth and gums healthy

Harvest of the Month Books

The Fruit Flies' Picnic
Kathleen Stefancin MS RD

My Food/Mi Comida
Rebecca Emberley

I Can Eat a Rainbow Board Book
Rena D. Grossman

Why Do I need to Eat Fruits and Veggies
Johanna Pomeroy Crockett

Nutrition Whip Around

1. I like watermelons because _____.
2. Draw a picture of a cantaloupe.
3. How many words can you make from the letters in the word "watermelon?"
4. Write an acrostic poem using the word "honeydew."
5. List ways you can include melons in your lunch or dinner.
6. Write a dinner menu including cantaloupe.
7. Write three words that describe honeydew.
8. List two ways you can eat more fruits in a day.
9. List two ways you can eat more vegetables in a day.
10. Melons belong to what food group?
11. Don't forget to eat your colors! Melons are in the Red, Green and Yellow/Orange color groups. Name one fruit or vegetable from these color groups.
12. List one way you can eat melons.
13. Write one sentence asking an adult to buy cantaloupes.
14. Instead of cookies, I can eat _____ for a healthful snack.

For more information regarding Harvest of the Month taste testing and nutrition education resources please contact:

***Network for a Healthy California
Merced County Office of Education***

(209) 381-5974 or email us at
nnetwork@mcoe.org.