



TEST Watermelon Agua fresca

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 3 / **Cook Time** 0 / **Serves** 1 - 12

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

bake: to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

Equipment

- ☐ Blender
- ☐ Toaster oven

Ingredients

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- ☐ 3 juice
- ☐ 5 oz. can

Food Allergen Substitutions

TEST Watermelon Agua fresca

Instructions

TEST Watermelon Agua fresca

mix + match

Do some stuff.

bake

Do some other stuff.

Featured Ingredient: Watermelon!

Hi! I'm Watermelon!

"Don't you love Watermelon!? Then you must love me—I'm a watermelon! I might seem hard to get to know, but if you cut or break me open, you'll see I'm really sweet inside. I can add so much joy and refreshment to everything, too, like summer picnics and yummy recipes like this one!"

History

Food historians think watermelon originated in the Kalahari Desert of Africa. However, the first recorded watermelon harvest was about 5,000 years ago in Egypt, illustrated on ancient walls in Egyptian hieroglyphics. From there, watermelon spread throughout countries along the Mediterranean Sea by way of merchant ships.

Watermelons were one of the items put in the tombs of kings to provide for them in the afterlife.

Watermelon was grown in India in the 7th century and by the 10th century had made its way to China, now the world's number one producer of watermelons.

In the 13th century, watermelon spread through the rest of Europe via the Moors.

Southern food historian, John Egerton, believes watermelon made its way to the United States with enslaved Africans, and now Americans eat more watermelon than cantaloupe and honeydew.

About 300 watermelon varieties are grown in the US and Mexico. They are of various weights, shapes, sizes, and colors like red, orange, yellow, and white.

The world's heaviest watermelon, at 350.5 pounds, was grown by Chris Kent in Tennessee in 2013.

Anatomy

Watermelon is a fruit because it grows from a seed, has a sweet, refreshing flavor, and is loosely considered a type of melon (although it is actually a type of berry called a pepo).

It can also be called a vegetable because it is a member of the same family as the cucumber, pumpkin, and squash. It is harvested and cleared from fields like other vine-growing vegetables.

A watermelon contains about 6 percent sugar and 92 percent water by weight.

Japanese scientists developed a seedless variety in 1939. However, seedless watermelons initially did not resist disease sufficiently, so they did not become widely available and popular until the 21st century.

How to Pick, Buy & Eat

When choosing a watermelon, look for one that is firm, symmetrical, and free from bruises, cuts, or dents. When you lift the watermelon, it should be very heavy for its size, as most of a watermelon's weight is water—the heavier, the juicier. Finally, the watermelon should have a yellow spot on it, where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun.

Farmers in Japan grow watermelons in glass boxes so they develop into a cube shape. The farmers initially did this so the watermelons would be stackable and easier to store. However, they eventually became a popular novelty at twice the price.

In China and Japan, watermelon is a popular gift to bring to a host of a party or gathering.

In Israel and Egypt, the sweet taste of watermelon is often paired with the salty taste of feta cheese.

Watermelon rinds are edible but do not taste good unless pickled or cooked. The seeds are also edible.

Don't worry, though—you won't grow a watermelon in your stomach if you eat the seeds with the flesh!

However, if you remove the seeds, you can dry them out and roast them. You can also grind them into flour after roasting using a coffee grinder.

You can eat watermelon alone or put chunks in fruit or green salads. You can also purée it to add to salsas, syrups, desserts (like popsicles and sorbets), and drinks (like smoothies and lemonade). Finally, you might try adding some to your BBQ sauce or even grill watermelon slices!

Nutrition

A watermelon's high water and electrolyte content make it ideal as a refreshing and hydrating summer thirst quencher that is good for our skin and helps clear toxins from our kidneys.

Watermelons contain high levels of vitamin C, which boosts immunity and healing power, and vitamin A, which is good for eyesight.

Watermelon is also high in lycopene, a carotenoid that makes some fruits and vegetables red or pink.

Tomatoes are most often connected to lycopene, but watermelon has more than raw tomatoes. However, products made from cooked tomatoes have a higher concentration. Study results vary on lycopene's health benefits, particularly cardiovascular health.

Drinking watermelon juice may relieve your muscle soreness due to L-citrulline, an amino acid that protects against muscle pain. The rinds also have L-citrulline, and they are high in fiber. Watermelon seeds contain iron, zinc, protein, and fiber.

Eating watermelon helps stop inflammation in your body that contributes to conditions like asthma, atherosclerosis, diabetes, some cancers, and arthritis.