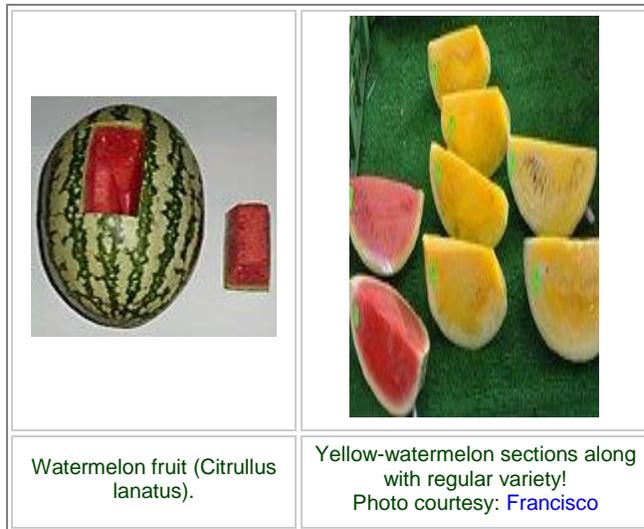


Watermelon Nutrition Facts

Wish to quench thirst while boosting your body with antioxidant lycopene and vitamin-A? Watermelon has everything you need to beat the scorching summer heat. Wonderfully delicious and juicy melons are the great source of much-needed water and electrolytes to tame hot, summer temperatures.

Botanically, the fruit belongs to the family of *Cucurbitaceae*, in the genus: *Citrullus*, and is related to the other same family members such as [cantaloupe](#), [squash](#), and [pumpkin](#) that run as vines on the ground surface. It is widely grown in many tropical countries where it is one of the major commercial fruit crops.

Botanical name: **Citrullus lanatus**.



Watermelon was originated from southern African countries and from where it spread to rest of the tropical and subtropical regions. After a couple of weeks of seedling, the plant bears many yellow flowers that may require honeybees for pollination.

Externally, the fruit features smooth, deep green to yellow, thick exterior rind with light-green or gray colored vertical stripes adorning its surface. Internally, the flesh is juicy and comes in different colors like pink, red, or yellow depending upon the cultivar type. Near its core, numerous small black seeds embed in the middle-third portion of the flesh.

Watermelon has a neutral flavor, and its taste somewhat described as plain-sweet water (light sugar syrup). Its flesh is soft yet crunchy unlike soft, creamy texture of [muskmelons](#).

Varieties of watermelon fruits are being cultivated the world over, featuring variation in their size, shape, and color of the flesh (red, orange, and yellow).

Health benefits of watermelon

- Rich in electrolytes and water content, melons are nature's gift to beat tropical summer thirst.
- Watermelons are very low in calories (just 30 calories per 100 g) and carry minimal fats. Nonetheless, they are plentiful in numerous health promoting phytonutrients and antioxidants essential for optimum health.
- Watermelon is an excellent source of **Vitamin-A**, which is a powerful natural antioxidant. 100 g fresh fruit provides 569 mg or 19% of daily-required levels of this vitamin. It is one of the essential vitamins needed for healthy vision and immunity. Vitamin-A is also required for maintaining healthy mucosa and skin. Consumption of natural fruits rich in vitamin-A is known to protect from lung and oral cavity cancers.
- It is also rich in antioxidant flavonoids like *lycopene*, *β -carotene*, *lutein*, *zeaxanthin*, and *cryptoxanthin*. These antioxidants have been found to offer protection against colon, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers. Phytochemicals present in watermelons like lycopene and carotenoids have the ability to help protect cells and other structures in the body from oxygen-free radicals.
- Watermelon is an excellent source of carotenoid pigment, **lycopene** and indeed, superior to raw red [tomato](#). 100 g of fresh melon provides 4532 μ g lycopene, whereas this value is only 2573 μ g for tomatoes. Studies suggest that lycopene offers protection to the skin against harmful UV rays.
- Watermelon fruit is a good source of potassium; Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure. It, thus, offers protection against stroke and coronary heart diseases.
- Furthermore, it contains a good amount of vitamin-B6 (pyridoxine), thiamin (vitamin B-1), **vitamin-C**, and manganese. Consumption of foods rich in vitamin-C helps the body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful oxygen-free radicals. The human body uses manganese as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, *superoxide dismutase*.
- Total measured antioxidant strength (ORAC value) of watermelon is 142 μ mol TE/100 g.

See the table below for in depth analysis of nutrients:
Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), fresh, Nutritive Value per 100 g,

(Source: USDA National Nutrient data base)

Principle	Nutrient Value	Percentage of RDA
Energy	30 Kcal	1.5%
Carbohydrates	7.6 g	6%
Protein	0.6 g	1%
Total Fat	0.15 g	0.5%
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Dietary Fiber	0.4 g	1%
Vitamins		
Folates	3 µg	1%
Niacin	0.178 mg	1%
Pantothenic acid	0.221 mg	4.5%
Pyridoxine	0.045 mg	3.5%
Thiamin	0.033 mg	3%
Vitamin A	569 IU	19%
Vitamin C	8.1 mg	13.5%
Vitamin E	0.05 mg	0.5%
Electrolytes		
Sodium	1 mg	0%
Potassium	112 mg	2.5%
Minerals		
Calcium	7 mg	0.7%
Copper	42 µg	4.5%
Iron	0.24 mg	3%
Magnesium	10 mg	2.5%
Manganese	0.038 mg	1.5%
Zinc	0.10 mg	1%
Phyto-nutrients		
Carotene-α	303 µg	--
Crypto-xanthin-β	78 µg	--
Lutein-zeaxanthin	8 µg	--
Lycopene	4532 µg	--

Selection and storage

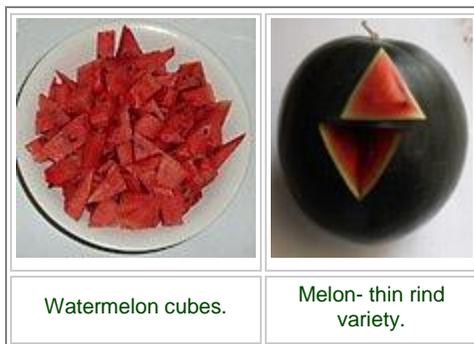
Although watermelons can be grown in all the seasons under tropical environments, they are at their best during summer months. In the markets, try to buy organically grown melons since they are richer in taste and nutrients.

Oftentimes, it is hard to judge ripeness and taste without checking a wedge section of the melon. Look for one that is heavy for its size, featuring rind that is relatively smooth, neither overly shiny nor overly dull, without any cuts or bruises on its surface that might have occurred during transportation.

Once at home, place the fruit in cool, well-ventilated place. The cut sections, however, should be kept in the refrigerator.

Preparation and serving method

Wash the whole melon in cold running water; one can also otherwise wash it with wet cloth to remove any surface dirt and insecticide/fungicide residues.



Watermelon cubes.

Melon- thin rind variety.

Depending upon the size that you desire, watermelon can be sliced, cubed, or scooped into balls.

Here are some serving tips:

- Fresh watermelon should be eaten as it is, without any additions/seasonings to experience its delicious, natural, sweet taste.
- Cubes or sections of the melon are a great addition to fruit salad. Top its wedges with cold chocolate cream and relish!
- Jam, sorbet, fruit cocktail and juice are some nutritious and delicious recipes you can make with melons.
- The seeds are roasted and eaten as a snack in some Asian countries.
- Its rind is used and eaten as a vegetable in some South American countries.

Safety profile

Allergy to watermelon is rare, and everyone can safely enjoy it. Its seeds generally discarded but cause no toxicity if ingested accidentally.

Further Resources:

- USDA National Nutrient Database.
- Stanford School of Medicine Cancer information Page-Nutrition to Reduce Cancer Risk.