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# Watermelon

## What's the Watermelon?

Watermelon is a vine-like flowering plant. It is a large, sprawling annual plant with coarse, hairy innately-lobed leaves and white to yellow flowers. It is grown for its edible fruit, also known as a watermelon.

- Outer features: smooth, thick exterior rind (hard rind), green or yellow color with light-green or gray colored vertical stripes all over its outer surface.
- Inner features: sweet interior flesh, juicy, red (is usually deep red to pink) or yellow with numerous small black seeds embedded in the middle third of the flesh.
- Flavor and taste: Watermelon has a neutral flavor, and its taste somewhat described as plain-sweet water (light sugar syrup).

## Watermelon History

The searchers say the origins of watermelon have been traced back to the deserts of southern Africa. The first recorded watermelon harvest occurred about 5,000 years ago in Egypt. Watermelons were often placed in the burial tombs of kings to nourish them in the afterlife. From there; watermelons were brought to countries along the Mediterranean Sea by way of merchant ships. By the 10th century, watermelon found its way to China, India Iran which is today one by largest watermelon producer in the worldwide. (Iranian watermelon is one of the best varieties watermelons in the worldwide. Iranian Sweetness watermelon makes popular in Arabic countries, Russia, Turkey, and Iraq and also most of country are most important client for Iranian watermelon).

### Where is Watermelon Growing?

Iran country is one of the best varieties watermelons in the worldwide because watermelons are tropical or subtropical plants and need temperatures higher than about 25 °C (77 °F) to thrive. Therefore watermelon needs to grow in warm places. Our county weather is suitable for watermelon growing.

### How is Watermelon growing?

Watermelon seeds are usually sowed directly in the garden. It's possible to start growing seedlings indoors and they transplant them into the garden. However, watermelons don't like it when their root system is disturbed. Watermelons need to be planted where they get at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight per day. Sunlight is crucial for fruit development. Most watermelon plants will produce 4-5 fruit per vine. The fruit is usually ready for harvest 75-100 days after planting, depending on the variety.

Watermelons have a good resistance to disease and pest problems. If planted in nutrient rich soil, watermelons don't usually need to be fertilized. They require a fair amount of water for the first few weeks of growth. When the fruit sets, you can almost stop watering the plants. As the fruit develops, the less water the plant gets - the better. Less water will increase the sugar content and concentration in the fruit, leading to sweeter, crisper melons.

### Watermelon Harvesting Time

Watermelon harvesting time is usually harvested in spring and summer season. The watermelon you planted will be ready about 80 or so days after you plant it from seed. This means, around day 75 or so, depending on how the season was.

### How to Pick a Ripe Watermelon

First, the curly green tendrils will start to yellow and turn brown. This is a sign that the plant is no longer feeding the watermelons and that the right time to pick a watermelon is at hand.

Second, if you pick up a watermelon and thump it with the palm of your hand, sometimes when they are ripe, you will find that they make a hollow sound. Keep in mind that not all ripe watermelon will make this sound, so if it doesn't make a hollow sound it doesn't mean the melon

isn't ripe. However, if it does make the sound, it is most assuredly ready to harvest. Finally, the surface color of the watermelon will become dull. The underside of the watermelon that was on the ground will also turn light green or yellow if it is time when to pick a watermelon.

### Uncut Watermelon Keeping Temperature

How can we keep or store uncut watermelon before freeze?

Room temperature: Our room temperature should be cool and average so can keep it 7 to 10 days.

Warm temperature: We can keep it up to a week in hot weather.

Cold temperature: If our place temperature be 55 degrees or above. We can keep it for two weeks.

### Cut Watermelon Keeping Methods

- Freezing Watermelon

There are various methods for freezing watermelon. In the first step we cut it to slices, wedges, cubes or balls, removing the rind and any seeds and then do one of these methods:

- Unsweetened Dry Pack: transfer the pieces to containers or plastic freezer bags. Then put them in a fridge.

- Sweetened dry pack method: Add 1 pound of granulated sugar to each 5 pounds of fruit; mix well. Pack in suitable containers.

- Syrup pack method: Use light syrup (9 cups of water or fruit juice to 2 1/4 cups sugar). Combine the sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil until the sugar is completely dissolved

You can be frozen watermelon for 8 to 12 months at 0°F (-18°C).

### Watermelon Nutrients

Watermelon is a rich source of high nutrition, minerals (Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, man genus, Phosphorous, Potassium, selenium, sodium, zinc, copper), vitamins (A, B, C, E, K), protein, dietary fiber, antioxidants. So all various Watermelons help and raise the immune system against diseases.

Watermelon is a low calorie, fat and sodium fruit. This fruit contains about 6% sugar and 91% water. The amino-acid coralline is produced in watermelon rind.

Per 100 g of Iranian watermelon includes:

- Minerals: Potassium – 112 mg, Calcium – 7 mg, Iron – 0.24 mg, Copper – 42 mcg, Manganese – 0.50 mg, Magnesium – 10 mg , Zinc – 0.10 mg, Sodium- 1 mg.

- Vitamins: Vitamin C – 8.1 mg, Vitamin A – 569 IU, Vitamin B9 (Folate) – 3 mcg, Pantothenic Acid – 0.221 mg, Vitamin B1 (Tiamina)- 0.033 mg, Niacina – 569 IU, Vitamin E – 0.05 mg, Vitamin K – 0.1 mcg, Vitamin B6 – 0. 40 mg.

- Protein: 0.6 g, Carbohydrates: 7.6 g, Total Fat: 0.15 g, Dietary Fiber: 0.4 g.

Therefore, Iranian watermelon can help and raise the immune system against diseases.

### Iranian Watermelon & Protections from Disease (Benefits)

Iranian Watermelon is rich and excellent source of high nutrients so it can be useful for our health and can also help or treat some diseases.

- Immune System

Iranian Watermelon is highly effective in enhancing the immune system function. Watermelon is suitable source of vitamin C which is a powerful antioxidant that protects our bodies from free radicals that can cause oxidative stress and lead to a host of severe medical conditions. Watermelons are very low in calories (just 30 calories per 100 g) and fats yet very rich source of numerous health promoting phyto-nutrients and anti-oxidants that are essential for optimum health.

- Treat Cancer

Too much oxidative stress caused by free radicals that it's with many different types of cancer. (Include lung, mouth, throat, colon, stomach and etc.)The vitamin C in Watermelon protects our bodies from this oxidative stress. Iranian Watermelon has been shown to contain an anti-mutagenic component, helping to prevent the mutations of genes that may initiate the cancer process.

- Heart Health and Reduce Blood Pressure

Due to its high potassium, Iranian Watermelon helps maintain blood pressure within normal ranges and prevent hypertension. In addition, potassium plays a critical role in regulating and improving heart function and heart health.

- Muscle Cramps

The minerals are one of good sources in Iranian Watermelon so help alleviate muscle fatigue, prevent muscle cramps and improve muscle strength.

- Relieve Thirst

Rich in electrolytes and water content, melons are nature's gift to beat tropical summer thirst.

- Treat most of Diseases

Watermelon is an excellent source of Vitamin-A, which is a powerful natural anti-oxidant. 100 g fresh fruit provides 569 mg or 19% of daily-required levels of this vitamin. It is one of essential vitamin for vision and immunity. Vitamin-A is also required for maintaining healthy mucus membranes 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 anti-oxidant flavonoids like lycopene, beta-carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin and cryptoxanthin. These antioxidants are found to offer protection against colon, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers. Phyto-chemicals present in watermelon like lycopene and carotenoids have the ability to help protect cells and other structures in the body from oxygen-free radicals.

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. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase.

### Watermelon Uses

Watermelon rinds are also edible, but most people avoid eating them due to their unappealing flavor. They are used for making pickles, and sometimes used as a vegetable. The seeds have a nutty flavor and can be dried and roasted, or ground into flour. The rind is stir-fried, stewed or more often pickled, and pickled watermelon rind is also sometimes eaten in some countries. Watermelon juice can be made into juice, on its own or blended with other fruits.

## Iranian Melons

Melon is a common term and genus (Citrinus) of plants. This great family contains full of fruit juice, appetizer and delicious which in the summertime eliminate our thirst. They are including: watermelon, muskmelon, cantaloupe, white honeydew and etc.

All these fruits are from one family and the difference is only due to the taste, color and size. We'll mention briefly contents in this field:

### Watermelon

- Specification: Watermelon is a delicious, sweet and juicy fruit that its rind is smooth, thick,

green or yellow color with light-green or gray colored vertical stripes all over its outer surface. Iranian watermelon flesh is red or yellow and full of small black seeds.

- Features: All the varieties watermelons are rich sources of high nutrients so could help and raise the immune system against diseases including: relieve thirst, heart health and reduce blood pressure, treat cancer and etc. This fruit has a lot of uses for us including: making pickles, syrup, jam and etc.

### **Cantaloupe**

- Specification: Cantaloupe is one of the most popular melons in the worldwide. The cantaloupe originated first in Iran (5000 years ago). This specie of melons has orange flesh and full of small yellow seeds. Cantaloupe is semi sweet (moderately sweet), flavorful, Juicy and its rind is thin and warty. The outer rind is tan or gray-green skin and its weight is from 500 g to 5 kg (1 to 10 lb.).

- Features: All the varieties watermelons are rich sources of high nutrients. This fruit is very low in calories (100 g fruit has just 34 calories) and fats. Cantaloupe is good source of vitamin A so it's essential for healthy vision. It is also required for maintaining healthy mucus membranes and skin. Consumption of natural fruits rich in vitamin A has been known to help protect from lung and oral cavity cancers. This fruit is normally eaten as a fresh fruit, as a salad, or as a dessert with ice cream or custard. Melon pieces wrapped in prosciutto are a familiar antipasto.

### **Muskmelon (Persian Melons)**

- Specification: Iranian Muskmelon or Persian melons is one of the most popular melons in Iran country. This specie of melons has yellow - white flesh with small yellow seeds. Its taste is sweet, flavorful, semi Juicy. The outer rind is yellow, thin with light-green vertical stripes all over its outer surface. Its shape is long and elongated or circle and its weight is above of 1 kg.

- Features: Muskmelons are an excellent source of vitamin A and vitamin C, and a good source of potassium. Therefore they can help or treat some diseases. Persian melons are best utilized in fresh preparations. They can be sliced, balled, pureed or when just ripe or slightly under ripe cut into ribbons. Persian melon puree can be used in sorbet, smoothies, pop-suckles or cold soups. Persian melon balls can be used fresh or frozen to enhance cocktails and juice. Their sweet flavor pairs well with citrus, mint, ginger, avocado, arugula, berries, robust cheeses

and cured meats. To store, keep whole melons at room temperature. Cut melon will keep wrapped in plastic for up to three days.