



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

Family Matters

Improving Health Together

July 2024 Newsletter

For back issues visit: [Family Matters Newsletter - Extension \(colostate.edu\)](https://colostate.edu/family-matters-newsletter-extension)

For more information, contact the CSU Extension Office near you. Or visit: [Extension - Providing trusted, practical education to help you solve problems, develop skills and build a better future. \(colostate.edu\)](https://colostate.edu/extension-providing-trusted-practical-education-to-help-you-solve-problems-develop-skills-and-build-a-better-future)

Articles in Family Matters are copyrighted, but may be reproduced in full without modification if credit is given to Family Matters, Family and Consumer Sciences and Colorado State University Extension. For all other requests, contact the author.

Colorado State University Extension is an equal opportunity provider. Colorado State University does not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to providing reasonable accommodations. CSU's Office of Engagement and Extension ensures meaningful access and equal opportunities to participate to individuals whose first language is not English.

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Colorado counties cooperating.

Melons-Ideas for the Whole Family Jaci Wagner-Family & Consumer Science Specialist, Logan County

Spring and Summer nights are filled with many outdoor activities, family barbecues, or summertime picnics. Watermelon and cantaloupe are a staple at many of these meals. They are a healthy option to have as a side dish or snack that take minimal preparation time and advance planning. While most people agree watermelon is delicious, often they are not aware of the many health benefits of this juicy fruit. Colorado has a great variety of locally grown watermelon and cantaloupe locations to choose from.



Watermelon: Watermelon has a very high-water content with few calories. Studies suggest this fruit may help maintain weight, boost cardiovascular health, reduce muscle soreness, and decrease inflammation. The sweet fruit provides nutrients like lycopene, citrulline, potassium, and vitamins A and C. It is a perfect fruit to eat on a hot summer day to stay hydrated and feel refreshed due to the large amount of water content in each slice.



There are many ways to eat a watermelon besides the traditional freshly cut pieces. You can also try watermelon lightly grilled, added to a salad or stir-fry, as an addition to a refreshing beverage or smoothie, or even pickling the rind.

When choosing the perfect watermelon look for one that is firm, symmetrical, and heavy. If it's heavy for its size, it is full of water and should be ripe and juicy. Look for a field spot that is light yellow showing that it has had time to sit in a field and ripen in the sun properly on its own.

Cantaloupe: Cantaloupes are fat free and rich in nutrients that can help fight diseases such as cancer. They contain Vitamins A and C along with potassium and folate. When choosing a cantaloupe find one that has a fragrant smell at the blossom end, is symmetrical and heavy for its size, and has a yellow or cream undertone. Try cantaloupe in a non-traditional way by combining the sweet flavor of cantaloupe slices with salty or spicy flavors. For example, try wrapping a peeled slice of cantaloupe in a salty slice of prosciutto or thinly sliced ham. For a spicy pairing replace the tomatoes in a gazpacho soup recipe with finely chopped or blended cantaloupe.



It is important to remember to rinse the outsides of both watermelon and cantaloupe when you bring it home to prevent food borne illness.

Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods ...

Let's Talk

Involving your children in picking out the perfect melon, rinsing, and cutting it at home, creates meaningful conversations and healthy habits learned. Use this time as a teachable moment to talk about the importance of staying hydrated and eating a variety of foods throughout the day. Turn the task of cutting up a melon into a math lesson by counting seeds or working on watermelon fractions. Whether turning the watermelon into different shapes as you cut or adding cubes of watermelon together, watermelon can be a fun and delicious learning tool!

Recipe for Health Mediterranean Watermelon Salad

Enjoy this crisp and flavorful watermelon salad with a zesty honey-lime dressing!

Serves 8

Ingredients:

Honey Lime Dressing

- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 2 Tablespoons lime juice
- 1-2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Pinch of salt

Salad

- ½ Watermelon peeled, cut into cubes
- 1 English cucumber, cubed (about 2 cups)
- 15 fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 15 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Directions:

1. Wash hands and food contact surfaces with soap and water.
2. Rinse and scrub the outsides of the watermelon under cool running water. Dry with a paper towel or clean cloth towel.
3. Peel and cut watermelon into 1- inch cubes
4. Rinse cucumber, mint, and basil leaves under running water.
5. Cube cucumber and chop herbs.
6. Make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the honey, lime juice, olive oil and pinch of salt. Set aside for a moment.
7. In a large bowl or serving platter with sides, combine the watermelon, cucumbers, and fresh herbs.
8. Top the watermelon salad with the dressing and gently toss to combine. Top with the feta cheese and serve.

While best served immediately, you can prepare the dressing up to 3 days in advance and refrigerated until used.

