

# Fruit of the Month

## Melons



Many melons originated in the Middle East and gradually spread its popularity across Europe. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupes or muskmelons. Melon seeds were transported to the United States by Columbus and eventually cultivated by Spanish explorers in California.

Most people don't know that melons are in the same gourd family as squashes and cucumbers. Most melons have similar structure to winter squash with thick flesh and inner seed-filled midsection. So what's the difference between melons and squashes? It's the way that they're used. Squashes are considered vegetables, while melons are known as fruits with sweet and juicy flavor.

Melons are a good source of vitamin C and potassium. They have high water content are relatively low in calories, and also fat and cholesterol free.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (134g)		Servings Per Container	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>			
<b>Calories 50</b>	<b>Calories from Fat 0</b>		
% Daily Value*			
<b>Total Fat 0g</b>	<b>0%</b>		
Saturated Fat 0g	0%		
<b>Cholesterol 0mg</b>	<b>0%</b>		
<b>Sodium 25mg</b>	<b>1%</b>		
<b>Total Carbohydrate 12g</b>	<b>4%</b>		
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%		
Sugars 11g			
<b>Protein 1g</b>			
Vitamin A 100%	• Vitamin C 80%		
Calcium 2%	• Iron 2%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4			

Cantaloupe

## Varieties

Melon varieties are now endless! Cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon are the most well known varieties. Lookout for more unusual melons at your local supermarket or farmer's market for a different and tasty sweet treat!



### Cantaloupe

Actually called a muskmelon, this familiar fruit with orange flesh and khaki netted colored skin provides the most beta-carotene in the entire melon family.

Select melons that are slightly golden with a light fragrant smell (an indication of its ripeness). Cantaloupe is typically available year-round, with a June through August peak season.



### Casaba

Unlike the other melons, casaba melons do not have an aroma. This is a large melon that is pale yellow when ripe and has white flesh with a sweet taste. This melon peaks in the fall, but starts showing up in markets in July through December.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (134g)  
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

**Calories 50**      **Calories from Fat 0**

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat 0g**      **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g      **0%**

**Cholesterol 0mg**      **0%**

**Sodium 35mg**      **1%**

**Total Carbohydrate 13g**      **4%**

Dietary Fiber 1g      **4%**

Sugars 12g

**Protein 1g**

Vitamin A 2%      • Vitamin C 45%

Calcium 0%      • Iron 2%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Honeydew



### **Crenshaw**

These melons can weigh up to ten pounds and deliver a unique sweet and spicy flavor. They are a hybrid between the casaba and Persian melon with a yellowish skin and salmon colored flesh. Peak season for Crenshaw melons is August through September, with the fruit season beginning in July and ending in October.



### **Honeydew**

The sweetest of all the melons and averaging five to six pounds, honeydew melons have a creamy yellow rind when ripe and pale green flesh. It's best from June through October, but is available year round.



### **Persian**

This melon is quite similar to the Cantaloupe, but it slightly larger in size, has a reener rind, and on the outside it has finer netting. Persian melons are peak in August and September with the season beginning in June and ending November.



### **Santa Claus**

This melon is also known as the Christmas melon because it peaks during the month of December. This variety is similar to the watermelon with the green and gold stripes, but is about a foot long and isn't as sweet as the other melons.



### **Sharlyn**

This melon tastes like a cantaloupe and honeydew combined. Sharlyn melons are sweet with netted outer layer, greenish-orange rind, and white flesh. The availability varies, so check your local supermarkets and farmer's market.

Photos courtesy of the Cook's Thesaurus

### **Selection**

In general, melons should be shaped according to their variety. For example, cantaloupes should be round, etc. In addition, melons should not have cracks, soft spots, or dark bruises. You should look for a clean and smooth break at the stem and for most mature melons have a fruity fragrance (if not chilled).

### **Storage**

Keep uncut melons at room temperature for two to four days or until fully ripe, then refrigerate for up to 5 days. Refrigerate cut up melon in a covered container up to 3 days. Remember that cut melons are aromatic and their smell will penetrate other foods.

### **Preparation**

Melon preparation is easy! Always wash melons in warm soapy water before cutting to get rid of any impurity on the rind that might be carried from the knife blade to the flesh. Simply cut the melon in half and scoop out the seeds and strings. Melons can be cut into halves, quarters, wedges, cubes, or scooped into balls with a melon baller. Most melons will benefit from a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to enhance the flavor and served at room temperature.

## Make Melons Part of Your 5 A Day Plan



- Melons make a great addition to fruit salads.
- Stir in melon in your cold fruit soups.
- Sliced melons make an attractive edible garnish.
- Make melon boats — scoop out melon balls then refill shell.
- For appetizers, wrap melon wedges or cubes with thinly sliced prosciutto ham.
- Season melon with lemon or lime juice or cayenne pepper.
- For dessert, serve melon with vanilla ice cream. Drizzle melon cubes with non-alcoholic syrups like hazelnut or orange.
- Dice up melons make great fruit salsas.
- Mix melons with chicken or seafood salad.
- Make quick melon kebobs! Thread different melon varieties on a skewer for a colorful 5 A Day treat.

## Recipes

### Melonicious Smoothie

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day Serving

$\frac{1}{4}$  cantaloupe — peeled, seeded and cubed

$\frac{1}{4}$  honeydew melon — peeled, seeded and cubed

1 lime, juiced

2 tablespoons sugar

In a blender, combine cantaloupe, honeydew, lime juice and sugar. Blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 51, protein 0g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 1%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 13g, fiber 0g, sodium 9mg

## **Chilled Cantaloupe Soup**

Makes 6 serving

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health

1 cantaloupe — peeled, seeded and cubed

2 cups orange juice

1 Tbsp fresh lime juice

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground cinnamon

Peel, seed, and cube the cantaloupe.

Place cantaloupe and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup orange juice in a blender or food processor; cover, and process until smooth. Transfer to large bowl. Stir in lime juice, cinnamon, and remaining orange juice. Cover, and refrigerate for at least one hour. Garnish with mint if desired.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 39, protein 0g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 0%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 9g, fiber 0g, sodium 0mg

## **Cantaloupe Salsa**

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/Del Monte Fresh Produce Company

$\frac{1}{2}$  cantaloupe (large, ripe)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup red bell pepper, finely diced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cilantro, finely chopped  
3 Tbsp scallions, finely chopped  
Juice of 1 lime  
Pinch of salt and hot pepper flakes

Remove seeds and rind from cantaloupe. (You should have approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound cantaloupe flesh.) Chop cantaloupe into very small dice. Put in bowl. Add diced red pepper, cilantro, scallions and lime juice. Stir. Add pinch of salt and pepper flakes. Chill. Serve with grilled chicken, fish or steaks.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 21, protein 1g, fat 1g, percent calories from fat 22%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 5g, fiber 2g, sodium 62mg

## **Southwestern Cantaloupe Salad**

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/Del Monte Fresh Produce Company

4 oz cantaloupe (ripe), thinly sliced  
4 oz jicama, peeled and thinly sliced  
3 oz red bell pepper, roasted, sliced  
3 oz yellow bell pepper, roasted, sliced  
1 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped  
2 Tbsp no-fat Italian dressing

Combine cantaloupe, jicama, peppers, and basil. Add salad dressing. Mix well. Serve on an attractively cut cantaloupe base, if desired.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 42, protein 1g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 9%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 8g, fiber 3g, sodium 154mg

## **Pineapple and Honeydew Salad with Honey Mustard and Lime Marinated Shrimp**

Make 4 servings

Each serving equals five 5 A Day servings

Source: Produce for Better Health/Del Monte Fresh Produce Company

1/3 lb large shrimp, peeled, deveined, cooked with tails left on

1/2 cup pineapple juice

1/2 cup sweet onion, minced

3 Tbsp honey mustard

2 Tbsp lime juice

2 Tbsp fresh mint, chopped

1/4 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

8 cup mixed baby salad greens

1/2 cup pineapple, peeled, cored, cut into 1/2 inch thick wedges

1/2 honeydew melon, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/2 inch thick wedges

1/2 English cucumber, thinly sliced diagonally

In small bowl, whisk together pineapple juice, onion, mustard, lime juice, mint, salt and pepper. Place shrimp in another bowl; add 1/4 cup of the marinade and toss to coat shrimp. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Reserve remaining marinade. To serve, place bed of greens on each of 4 plates. Arrange pineapple, honeydew melon and cucumber on top of greens. Top with shrimp and drizzle salads with remaining marinade. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 134, protein 11g, fat 2g, percent calories from fat 13%, cholesterol 58mg, carbohydrates 21g, fiber 4g, sodium 301mg