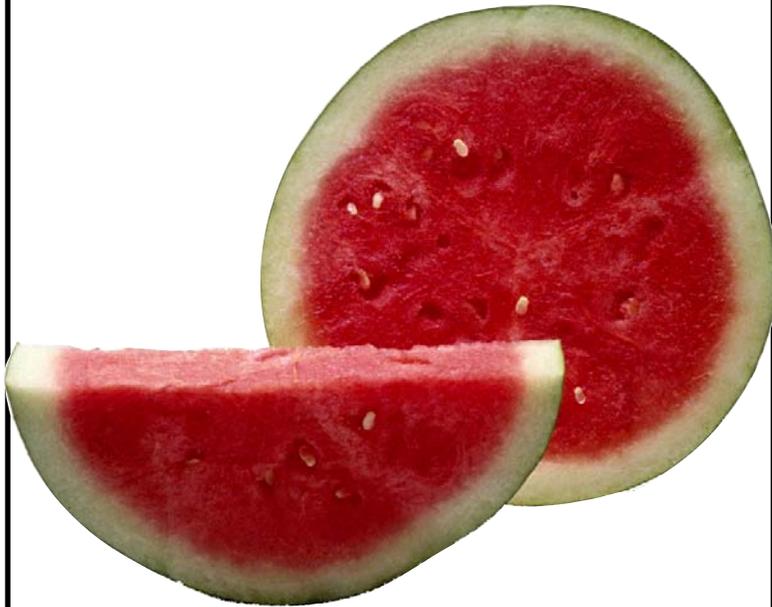




A Garden-Based Learning Program for Preschoolers

WATERMELON



On a hot summer day, watermelon can be a great snack. Watermelons are 92 percent water, which makes it a great low calorie fruit. There are many varieties of watermelon. They can have seeds or be seedless. They are also a good source of vitamin C, which helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Watermelon is available in grocery stores all year, but its peak season is midsummer. Watermelon should be firm, symmetrical, and free from cracks, mold or bruises. Also, it should have a dull rind, dried stem, and buttery yellow underside from where it laid on the ground.

MyPyramid suggests that adults eat 2 to 2½ cups of fruits a day. Children ages 3 to 5 years should eat 1½ cups of fruits a day. Watermelon can be added to salads, fruit smoothies, fruit trays, or in place of tomatoes in salsa for a fresh taste! Watermelon can be eaten for breakfast, snacks, lunch, dinner, and even as a dessert.

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/watermelon.html>

MEALTIME IDEAS

Watermelon cookies are a great healthy alternative for your sweet tooth. Here are some recipes to try for a snack or dessert:

Frosted Watermelon

Seedless watermelon
Yogurt, plain or flavored
Granola or similar cereal

Directions

Using your favorite cookie cutter, cut shapes out of ½-to ¾-inch thick slices of seedless watermelon. "Frost" watermelon with yogurt. Sprinkle with granola.

Watermelon Dip (12 servings)

If you have leftover watermelon, this fresh dip is a treat everyone will love.

8 oz. low-fat sour cream
4 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Watermelon sticks
or small wedges



Directions

Blend together sour cream, sugar, and vanilla in a small serving bowl. Use as a dip for the watermelon.

Calories 40; Total fat 1.5g; Saturated fat 1g; Cholesterol 5mg; Sodium 10mg; Total Carbohydrates 5g; Dietary fiber 0g; Sugar 5g; Protein 1g

FOOD SAFETY TIP

Remember to wash hands before preparing food. Wash all vegetables thoroughly before use. Leftovers should be covered and stored in the refrigerator.

IN THE GARDEN

Thinking about growing watermelon? Use the following tips to help you grow watermelon for your family:

- Place seeds in hole 12 inches apart. Cover with 1 inch of soil.
- Plant seeds in April.
- Water frequently, but do not overwater.
- Plants need full sun and heat.
- Harvest fruit around 80 days after planting.
- The "tone" of a melon indicates ripeness; high pitch means not ripe, low pitch means too ripe and medium, dull pitch means ripe!

Garden Tabloid #1091, Mississippi State University Extension Service



I CAN HELP BY

- Wiping the table.
- Washing the fruit.
- Measuring the ingredients (with your assistance).
- Mixing together the ingredients.
- Helping with clean-up after the meal.

BUDGET TIP FOR BUYING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



Pick your own produce at local farms. Late summer and early fall is a great time to pick your own fruits and vegetables. This can be a fun and less expensive way to buy in bulk and freeze, can, or dry for later.

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/Stretch_FV_Budget.pdf

NAME THE DIFFERENT MELONS

There are different kinds of melons at local grocery stores and farmer's markets. Help your preschooler identify the different melons by name. Take a melon home for the family to try for a healthy dessert.

We found these melons:

Count the melons

How many melons did you find in the store? If there is only one, how many of that one type of melon was available in the grocery store or farmer's market?

My family and I found _____ melons.



LET'S GET MOVING

Try this fun game with your preschoolers:

"TAE BALLOON" KICKBOXING

Materials: large balloon and long string (as needed)
Tie a large balloon onto a ceiling or tree limb so it hangs at eye level. Make sure no breakables or players are in the way. Stand in front of the balloon in the "ready" position, which is feet shoulder-width apart, one foot slightly in front of the other, and fists guarding the face. The players can practice punching and kicking the balloon. "Tae Balloon" Kickboxing is for sports training, not self-defense. Have the watching players count the number of punches or kicks. Make sure that there is an adult nearby to supervise the activity.

Sweet, Julia E. (2001). 365 Activities for Fitness, Food, and Fun for the Whole Family. "Tae Balloon" Kickboxing (pp. 103-104). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill



FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?

The largest watermelon in the Guinness Book of World Records weighed 262 pounds!

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/watermelon.html>

**MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™**

EXTENSION SERVICE

Discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated. Discrimination based upon sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.