



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Seashells

Issue 29, 2022

Founded by Betty Debnam



photo by Harsha K R

Tasty Watermelons

Mini Fact:

A typical watermelon is made up of 92% water.

As the days get warmer, people often seek ways to stay cool. One thing many people enjoy during the hot summer months is a juicy slice of watermelon.

The Mini Page takes a look at watermelons this week.

Fruit or vegetable?

People have debated for a long time whether watermelons are fruits or vegetables, and botanically (buh-TAN-ic-ly) speaking, they're a fruit. Botanically means "relating to plants."

Watermelons form from flowers that are pollinated by bees, and melons contain seeds, so that's what makes them a fruit.



photo by John Hunt

History

Nearly 5,000 years ago in Africa, an ancestor plant of the watermelon was of great importance to the people in this hot, dry environment. People in the area of the Kalahari Desert depended on the plant to store water. This desert region is extremely dry, and water can be hard to find, so people who live there take great care to store it.

While scientists don't know exactly what

the ancestor plant was, we do know that it had bitter flesh and that people would roast it and eat its seeds for nutrition.

Romans and Greeks used watermelon for its medicinal value. If a child got heatstroke, physicians placed a wet, cool rind on the child's forehead in order to lower their body temperature.

Watermelon was popular in India as far back at the 7th century. And by the 1600s, watermelons were grown in much of the warmer parts of Europe.

Watermelons showed up in America around 1570, when they found a new home in Florida.

Ways to enjoy

Watermelons are most often enjoyed during the summertime because they grow best in hot conditions. People eat watermelons in many ways, but here are a few ideas you might haven't thought about.

Some people add lime juice, salt, chile pepper flakes or even black pepper to their slices.

As a main dish, some people add watermelon to fresh salads or even to sandwiches in place of a tomato slice.



photo by Marco Verch

Varieties

If you ever visit a garden with watermelons growing, you might notice how they grow on a vine. Some might be small and others large, depending on their type, age and health.

The heaviest watermelon was recorded in 2013. It weighed in at a whopping 350.5 pounds!

Weight can depend on the varieties, or types, of watermelons. Since these tasty treats are grown all over the world, there are many types suited to grow best in a particular area.

There are more than 50 varieties.

However, watermelons are often grouped into four general types: picnic, seedless, icebox and yellow/orange fleshed.

Picnic: Larger, 16-45 pounds.

Seedless: Actually do have tiny seeds.

Icebox: Smaller, usually 5-10 pounds.

Yellow/orange fleshed: Can be both seedless and seeded. Like the name tells us, these melons have flesh that is yellow to orange in color.



photo by Momo

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPwatermelon
- kidskonnct.com/science/watermelon/

At the library:

- "Watermelon Bellies" by Jennifer Nwokeji

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of watermelon are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BEES, COLOR, DESERT, FLORIDA, FRUIT, ICEBOX, INDIA, PICNIC, POLLINATION, RIND, SALAD, SEED, SEEDLESS, SLICE, STORAGE, VARIETY, VINE, WATERMELON.

Z S S K E N S T O R A G E N O
X A N U R E C I L S D R I N D
O L F L O R I D A S E E B J S
B A T R E S E D W W Y Z Q S S
E D W A T E R M E L O N E Q E
C W K N O I T A N I L L O P E
I G P I C N I C A I D N I I D
F R U I T G C P X E Y Q V R O
Y T E I R A V T E L U B T B O
X G T V I N E S C O L O R K G

Cook's Corner

Frozen Watermelon Treats

You'll need:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 cups watermelon juice
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Cook water and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Simmer 3 minutes.
2. Remove from heat. Add watermelon and lemon juice. Mix well.
3. Fill ice trays with mixture.
4. Freeze until mushy. Place a wooden stick in each cube. Freeze until firm. Makes about 36 treats.

Mini Jokes



Wyatt: How did the watermelon farmer feel after winning the lottery?

Whitney: Like a "melon" bucks!

Eco Note



An international study of reptiles by more than 900 scientists across six continents finds that more than a fifth of all species are threatened with extinction. "If we remove reptiles, it could change ecosystems radically, with unfortunate knock-on effects, such as increases in pest insects," said researcher Neil Cox. While many reptiles are found in arid regions, far more live in forests, where they are threatened by climate change, logging and expanding agriculture.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.

For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about summer fruits.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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1. Shaped with curves, like a circle (5-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □

2. Liquid removed from fruit (5-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □

3. The quality of heaviness of an object (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

4. Appealing, especially to taste or smell (9-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Miguel picked a _____ green melon from the vine.
2. Susan wiped _____ off her face while eating the ripe melon.
3. The _____ of the melon made it too hard for Jim to lift.
4. Sam planned to eat five slices of the _____ melon.

ROOTONYM®

by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Round, Juice, Weight, Delicious.

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