

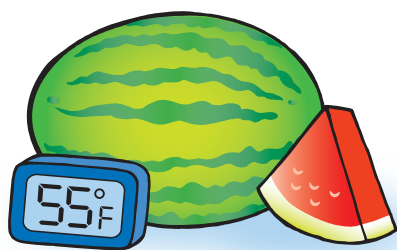
Watermelon Facts

Watermelon Care & Handling

How Do I Pick A Good Watermelon?

Some people like to tap a watermelon and listen for a "thump." Although folks rely on that method, we've found following these tips will help pick the best watermelon available.

1. Look it over, choose a firm, symmetrical watermelon that is free of bruises, cuts and dents.
2. Lift it up – the watermelon should feel heavy for its size – it is 92% water.
3. Turn it over – on the underside of the watermelon there should be a creamy, yellow spot (called the ground spot) from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun.



What's the Proper Temperature for Storing Watermelon?

Store whole watermelon on the warm side

Compared to most fruits, watermelons need a more "tropical" climate - a thermometer reading of 55° F is ideal. However, whole melons will keep for 7 to 10 days at room temperature. Store them too long, and they'll lose flavor and texture.

Lower temperatures cause chill injury

After two days at 32° F, watermelons develop an off-flavor, become pitted and lose color. Freezing causes rind to break down and produces a mealy, mushy texture. Once a melon is cut, it should be wrapped and stored at 37° - 39° F.

Should I Wash a Watermelon before I Use It?

Yes. According to the FDA, you should wash all fruits and vegetables, including watermelons, in clean, running water before eating them. This is true of all fruits and vegetables, whether they have rinds or not.

You should also use clean knives and cutting surfaces, taking care to never cut fruit or vegetables with a knife just used to cut raw meat, chicken or seafood. Additionally, persons preparing melons, fruits, vegetables or other foodstuffs should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water prior to preparing the food for eating.

