



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



## The Flavor Experience Inspires Foodservice Operators

The Flavor Experience, brought to you by *Flavor & The Menu* magazine, is the foodservice industry's ultimate celebration of flavor, offering inspiration to high-volume food and beverage menu developers. Board President Christian Murillo was in attendance to provide insights on the watermelon industry to the foodservice operators in attendance. He helped tell the year-round story of watermelon and soak in the content and tastes shared throughout the 3-day conference, with staff member Megan McKenna and consultants Chef Jason Hernandez and Susan Hughes.

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## Flavor Experience Continued

The Watermelon Board, a long-time sponsor, highlighted three menu items:

- **Watermelon Braised Machaka Breakfast Tacos** – watermelon was used to braised the meat and the taco was served with a Dried Chili Watermelon Salsa
- **Watermelon Greek Salad Cup** – watermelon was the star with flesh being the predominant ingredient, topped with watermelon rind pickle (pictured top, far left)
- **Jalisco Watermelon Beef Taquito** – watermelon was used to braised the meat and the jicama shell taquito was served with watermelon mole and watermelon pico de gallo (pictured bottom, far left)

Watermelon was **featured in six other food and beverage menu items**, including a Watermelon and Hibiscus Margarita (pictured top, middle), a testament to consumer's demand and watermelon's ability to fit current foodservice trends. There were more than 200 attendees from more than 100 operators present, **representing more than 80,000 foodservice locations across the country!** Although not every brand can handle fresh watermelon, some brands that can in attendance included Applebee's, Bloomin' Brands, Morrison, Nordstrom, Rubio's, Fat Brands, and Jason's Deli. Follow-up is ongoing.





## Watermelon Nutrition Research Presented at IHA

The Texas A&M AgriLife Institute for Advancing Health Through Agriculture (IHA) is the world's first academic institute to bring together precision nutrition, responsive agriculture, and social and behavioral research to reduce diet-related chronic disease and lower healthcare costs in a way that supports producers and the environment. The IHA relies on millions of dollars of funding from federal, state and other entities to achieve its mission. **NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney and Research Committee Chairman Jose Gomez (pictured, right)** were invited to attend and provide input at the Agriculture Nutrition Workshop hosted by IHA. **Arney presented an overview of the Board's research activities with an emphasis on recently funded nutrition research projects.** IHA will use the input gathered from the NWPB, and other commodity groups present, to fine tune its three focus areas (precision nutrition, responsive agriculture, and social and behavioral research) to include topics such as food insecurity.



## New England Produce Council

NWPB returned as exhibitors to the New England Produce Council's Produce Show and Conference held August 24-25 in Boston, Massachusetts. The two-day event, attended by Director of Retail and International Marketing Juliemar Rosado and Retail Account Rep Katie Manetti, included educational sessions, networking opportunities, and tradeshow. The show provided the perfect setting in which to once again **engage with retailers, media, and the foodservice industry about materials and information NWPB has available for them in promotion and retail education.** As an exhibitor, the NWPB interacted with many retailers such as Market Basket, Tops Market, Roche Brothers and Whole Foods, to name a few.



## Shopping for Health

The Shopping for Health (SFH) retail dietitian-focused event returned to in-person in July, and the Watermelon Board sponsored a goodie bag inclusion for watermelon education and information representation. The SFH conference is an **exclusive group of 25 retail dietitians from chains consisting of 7,500 individual grocery stores in every state**. They join representatives of leading food and beverage companies and associations at this annual conference to learn more about the food products they serve with nutrition information, recipes, **and ideas on how to better serve their shoppers. Connecting with consumers at the point of meal planning, at the point of sale, in-store is a unique placement for integrating watermelon benefits and inspirational meal ideas.**



In addition to providing the Registered Dietitian Toolkit to all attendees, the Watermelon Board also included a branded can koozie with three watermelon recipe cards stuffed inside, a canvas baseball cap with the Watermelon.org logo and scented watermelon pens. The **conference incorporated watermelon at meals and snacks at no additional cost** and also provided both pre- and post-event survey

question opportunities, to gain valuable insight as to how watermelon is viewed. An example of one of the pre-survey question is featured above, illustrating that **“Hydration” was the nutrition benefit most promoted by RD’s that were surveyed.**





# International Fresh Produce Association's Foodservice Show

Although the first for the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), it was not the first year for the Foodservice Show (a Produce Marketing Association legacy event) in Monterey, CA in July. **The event had record attendance with nearly 2,000 present, including approximately 900 buyers from 250 companies.** The



Foodservice Show is the largest gathering **connecting fresh produce and foodservice in the country.** To inspire operators to use watermelon, the Watermelon Board sponsored a sampling station outside the show floor. The Board served a Watermelon and Feta Salad and an Indian Watermelon Rind Stir Fry – touching upon trends such as sustainability, global flavors, year-round availability and more. **NWPB staffer and IFPA Produce Foodservice Chair, Megan McKenna, participated in the Foodservice Think Tank bringing together suppliers, distributors and operators to discuss industry hardships and opportunities.** Megan also was a mentor through the Career Pathways Program. Brinker, Denny's, Hello Fresh, Texas Roadhouse and Tropical Smoothie Café are just a few of the national chains the Board connected with onsite.

## Watermelon Flavor Dynamics

When you layer cooking techniques, taste affinities, flavor contrasts and global flavors, watermelon reveals its culinary potential.



**Cooking Techniques**

**FLESH**  
Compressed, Seared, Grilled, Roasted, Broiled, Smoked, Dehydrated, Pureed, Foam, Carbonated, Infused

**RIND**  
Grated, Pickled, Stir Fried, Sauteed, Braised, Fermented

**Flavor Contrasts**

<p><b>FATTY</b> Avocado Pork Belly Coconut</p> <p><b>HERBACEOUS</b> Fennel Cucumber Dill Parsley Extra Virgin Olive Oil</p>	<p><b>AROMATIC</b> Kaffir Lime Vanilla Almond Extract Preserved Lemon</p> <p><b>PUNGENT</b> Harissa Lemon Asafoetida Red Onion</p>	<p><b>EARTHY</b> Tahini Cumin Beet</p> <p><b>FERMENTED</b> Fermented Black Beans Serrano Ham</p>
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**Taste Affinities**

<p><b>SALTY</b> Flaky Sea Salt Feta Cheese Fish Sauce</p> <p><b>SWEET</b> Maple Syrup Fennel Pollen White Chocolate</p>	<p><b>SOUR</b> Lime Juice Goat Cheese</p> <p><b>BITTER</b> Extra Virgin Olive Oil Dark Chocolate Mustard Seed</p>	<p><b>UMAMI</b> Soy Sauce Aged Cheese Tuna Lamb</p> <p><b>FULL BALANCE</b> Tajin</p>
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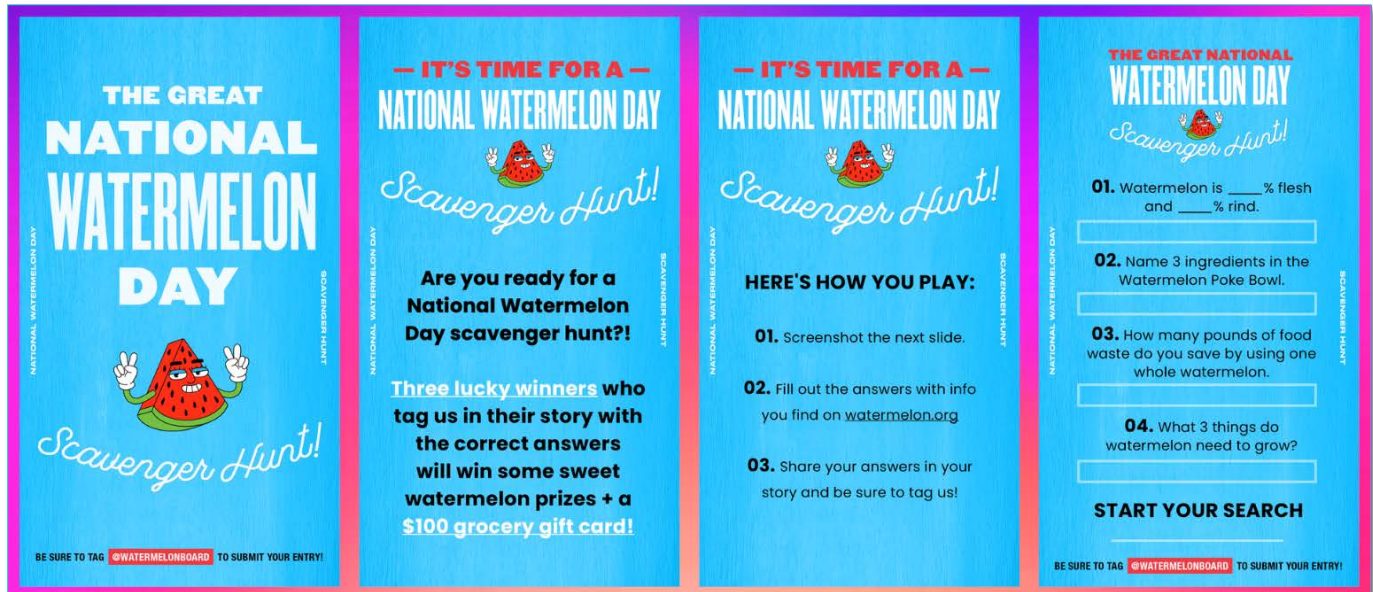



 [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org)





## National Watermelon Day Scavenger Hunt



This year, on August 3 for National Watermelon Day, NWPB activated its **first-ever online Scavenger Hunt**. The 24-hour campaign asked watermelon trivia questions via IG stories and encouraged followers to visit [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org) to assist with correct answers. The incentivized campaign, though short in duration, gave a snapshot about how the NWPB community chooses to engage/participate – and help to establish the likelihood for similar campaigns at a later date.



## Ad Results: Spotify and Hulu Pilot Programs

Similar to other mainstream media advertising, the **primary goal of both Spotify and Hulu pilot programs is awareness**. Unlike YouTube pre-roll advertising with an immediate call to action, the majority of Spotify and Hulu users are not clicking out of the streaming platform during ads. That said, the Spotify campaign is pacing well to spend the allocated budget and has **166,682 impressions**. The performance media team at our agency partner Curious Plot is looking into ways we can optimize the budget further. The Hulu campaign has **163,040 impressions to-date** and is currently moving from summer-focused content to a kids/hydration-focused ad that will run throughout the fall season.



## Build Up Dietitians Ad

The ad (pictured right) had **very strong results on Facebook**. Figures below represent boosted numbers only and do not include organic numbers which would be higher.

*Facebook boosted post #1 (ran for 8 days) – Appeared on main page and boosted to US audience*

- Reach: 55,473
- Link Clicks: 715
- Engagement: 807
- Shares: 16
- 86% Women; 14% Men – Primary Demographic Age: 25-34 year old

*Facebook boosted post #2 – (ran for 1 day – only for National Watermelon Day)*

- Reach: 2805
- Link Clicks: 136
- 94.5% Women; 5.5% men

*Linkedin Boosted post*

- Reach: 6314
- Link Clicks: 34
- Shares: 1

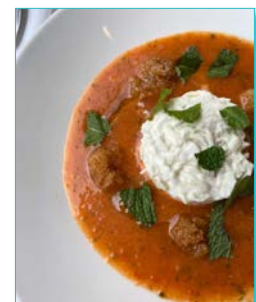
*Shared in Private/Closed Groups:*

- Pediatrics – Reach: 205
- Food Service: 84
- Public Health: 118



## Watermelon on the Menu

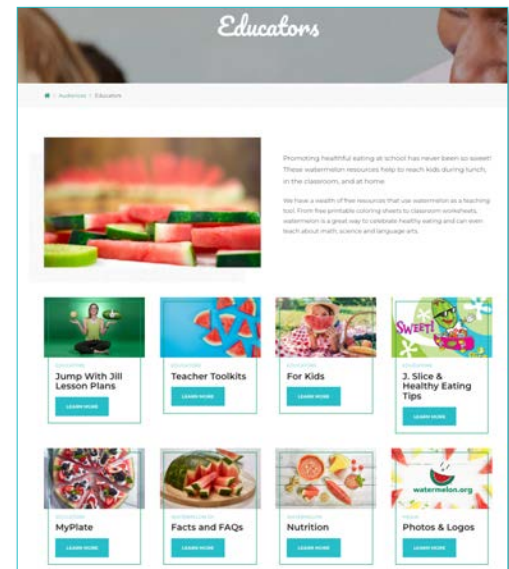
New Orleans-based French restaurant Herbsaint is currently offering **Watermelon Gazpacho** topped with crab meat salad. It is also served with jalapeno lime aioli and fried bread. The gazpacho is a **customer favorite** and has been featured on the summer menu for the last several years.



## Educator and Teacher Resources Year to Date

Did you know that the Watermelon.org website has an **Audience section dedicated to Educators and Teachers? Providing free resources that use watermelon education and watermelon as an educational tool is an important outreach effort to a group of influencers.** Not only are there Teacher Toolkit worksheets that cover K-5 subjects of Math, Social Studies, Language Arts and Science, but also there are Lesson Plans, Coloring Pages, Activities and Worksheets. We promote this section via TheMailbox.com and their “teacher influentials” and share these resources when and where we interact with educators throughout the year.

*Pageviews on watermelon.org:*



Page	Pageviews
<b>Audience/Educators</b>	<b>3,308</b>
<b>Jump with Jill Lesson Plans</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Teacher Toolkits</b>	<b>645</b>
<b>For Kids</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>J. Slice &amp; Healthy Eating Tips</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>MyPlate</b>	<b>524</b>



## NWPB Connections

Market Research - Bermuda – September 11 – 14 – Hamilton, Bermuda

FoodOvation – September 18 – 20 – Sun Valley, ID

NWPB Fall Board Meeting – September 29 – 30 – Orlando, FL

