

# NEWS RELEASE

## National Watermelon Promotion Board FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Watermelon Board's Summer Foodservice Program Elevated Watermelon's Versatility by Familiarizing Global Flavors

*Watermelon included in more trend-forward applications*

Winter Springs, FL – August 28, 2023 – This summer, the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB)'s Foodservice program showcased the versatility of watermelon as a trend-forward ingredient. The campaign focused on reimagining the possibilities of watermelon in menu offerings and applications by adding the well-loved fruit to new, inspiring global flavors.

According to NWPB's own [2022 Foodservice Operator Omnibus and Consumer Survey](#), 72% of consumers believe that "Fresh watermelon is under-appreciated, and restaurants should be doing more to use fresh watermelon in new and interesting ways." Additionally, "Most consumers believe watermelon can be an on-trend ingredient, and operators agree." With both consumers and foodservice operators eager to see watermelon incorporated in innovative ways on menus, the time is ripe for culinary exploration and education.

Central to this year's program is a new resource meant to empower culinary professionals. The NWPB created [Watermelon Flavor Dynamics](#), a tool that delves into Cooking Techniques, Taste Affinities, and Flavor Contrasts. This comprehensive guide also includes a Flavor Pairing Guide categorized by Region of the World, providing chefs, foodservice operators, K-12 and marketing and purchasing decision-makers with a roadmap to crafting trend-forward and culturally rich dishes.

Spearheaded by Senior Director of Foodservice & Marketing Megan McKenna, the NWPB embarked on educating and inspiring culinary enthusiasts about how to leverage fresh watermelon on the menu in the most impactful ways. Examples include:

- June – Center for Advancement of Foodservice Educators (CAFE) annual leadership conference – the opening reception featured Watermelon Rind Gazpacho and Burmese Watermelon Salad. The trade show included watermelon 101, information about free resources and support from the Board and a hands-on garde manger (carving) class.
- July - International Fresh Produce Association Foodservice Show – NWPB sponsored a sampling station outside the show floor, serving the Watermelon Burmese Salad and Watermelon Rind Gazpacho, highlighting using the whole product and global flavors. New this year, the Board sponsored the K-12 Foodservice Forum introducing opportunities with NWPB's school foodservice recipes. Watermelon was featured during a K-12 ideation session on building flavors without sodium – including watermelon plus lemon juice, watermelon plus lemon juice and mint.
- August – Flavor Experience – Offered inspiration to menu developers and operators by serving Spice Smoked Watermelon Bao, Char Sui Watermelon and Lamb Egg Roll Bowl, and a Watermelon Jelly Donut. Flavor Experience hosts more than 200 national and regional brands with menus highlighting on-trend food items.

"The idea is to build awareness of watermelon's versatility and shift perceptions away from nostalgia and explore watermelon in contemporary uses," said McKenna. "We are already seeing many operators at the independent level embrace watermelon in trend-forward applications. NWPB plays a pivotal role in helping to bridge culinary trends and high volume operators through education and innovation support."

This fall, NWPB will continue to encourage innovation by collaborating with foodservice operators with a focus on flavor. Building on the momentum from the summer campaign, NWPB will sponsor the Latin American Cuisine Summit, MenuDirections, and the International Foodservice Editorial Council. For more information about the [Watermelon Flavor](#)

[Dynamics](#) tool or Foodservice program at the NWPB, contact Megan McKenna, Senior Director of Marketing & Foodservice at [mmckenna@watermelon.org](mailto:mmckenna@watermelon.org).

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### **About National Watermelon Promotion Board**

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 700 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

A serving of nutrient-dense watermelon provides an excellent source of Vitamin C (25% DV), a source of Vitamin B6 (8% DV), and a delicious way to stay hydrated (92% water), with only 80 calories per 2-cup serving. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was nearly 15.5 pounds in 2022. Watermelon consumption in the United States was nearly 5.2 billion pounds in 2022. The United States exported an additional 328 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org).