

Cantaloupe Facts



Seasonality

Cantaloupes are available August through October in Colorado. They are also produced year round in warmer climates such as Arizona and California.



Is it ok for me to eat a cantaloupe that looks 'blemished' on the outside?

This blemish is most likely the 'ground spot', or where the melon rested on the ground during its growing period. This side of the melon may look different and be slightly less ripe, however, it is still good to eat. The spot may also be caused by 'sun scald', or a side of the fruit exposed to too much sun. Sunspots on melons do not affect their quality unless it is unusually severe.

Related Links:

Cucumbers, Pumpkins, Squash and Melons
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07609.html>

Safe Handling of Melons
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/safefood/newsltr/v5n1s01.html>

Guide to Minimize Food Safety Hazards on Melons
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlanProducts/ucm174171.htm>

Cantaloupe is a type of melon characterized by a webbed surface. The scientific name of this fruit is *Cucumis melo*, also known as muskmelon. It belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family, which includes melons, squash, and cucumbers. Cantaloupes are named for the papal gardens of Cantalupo, Italy where some historians report this species of melon was first grown. Cantaloupes have a sweet fragrance when they are ripe and the blossom end of the fruit should yield to moderate pressure.

Selection

When selecting cantaloupes, avoid those with a stem, which indicates the cantaloupe was harvested too early. Choose fragrant, symmetrical cantaloupes that are heavy for their size with no visible bruises and a yellow or cream undertone. Ripe cantaloupes will yield slightly to pressure on the blossom end. Avoid cantaloupes that have a damaged or cut outer rind, are mushy, molded, shriveled, or leaking.

Colorado Production of Cantaloupes

Colorado's melon production is centered in the Arkansas Valley around Rocky Ford, a name that is synonymous with cantaloupe melons. Since 1895, the Arkansas Valley of Colorado has been producing the highest quality cantaloupes. The U.S. commercial cantaloupe production actually began in the Arkansas Valley right near the town of Rocky Ford. Many people travel to the Arkansas Valley each year to sample the delicious Rocky Ford melons, tour the melon fields, and take a few home.

Researchers say that Rocky Ford melons are sweet because of the wide temperature swings that the region experiences during the summer. Days can reach as hot as 100 °F while nights may have lows in the 50's. The combination of warm weather and high elevation (4,000 feet above sea level) may increase sugar production. The cool Colorado nights then allow the sugars to accumulate in the melons as the growing process slows down.

Safe Handling and Preparation

Before cutting open a cantaloupe, wash the outside rind thoroughly in a clean sink under cool running water. Scrub with a clean vegetable brush to remove any soil or bacteria on the rind that might be carried from the knife blade to the flesh during slicing. Place the melon on a clean cutting board. Using a clean knife, slice open the melon and scoop out all the seeds and strings. Cantaloupe can be cut into halves, quarters, wedges, cubes, or balls.

Colorado Cantaloupes

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup cubed (160g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 50	Calories from Fat 5
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 25mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 12g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 110%	• Vitamin C 100%
Calcium 2%	• Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300 mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

Nutritional Facts

Cantaloupes are rich in nutrients that fight disease, including cancer. They contain significant amounts of Vitamins A and C, are a good source of potassium and folate, and contain small amounts of many minerals. Cantaloupes are fat free and very low in sodium.

Buying Cut Melon

If purchasing a cut or diced melon, make sure that the container is stored in a chilled area, preferably a refrigerated case. If cut melon is displayed on ice, make sure the entire bottom half of the container is covered and the lid is cold to the touch.



Recipe Developed at The University of Georgia, Athens, for the National Center for Home Food Preservation. Released by Elizabeth L. Andress, Ph.D., Department of Foods and Nutrition, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. August 2003.

Cantaloupe Pickles

5 pounds of 1-inch cantaloupe cubes
(about 2 medium under-ripe* cantaloupe)
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 one-inch cinnamon sticks
2 teaspoons ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground ginger
4½ cups cider vinegar (5%)
2 cups water
1½ cups white sugar
1½ cups packed light brown sugar

*Select cantaloupe that are full size but almost fully green and firm to the touch in all areas including the stem area.

Day One:

1.) Wash cantaloupe and cut into halves; remove seeds. Cut into 1 inch slices and peel. Cut strips of flesh into 1 inch cubes. Weigh out 5 pounds of pieces and place in large glass bowl.

2.) Place red pepper flakes, cinnamon sticks, cloves and ginger in a spice bag and tie the ends firmly. Combine vinegar and water in a 4-quart stockpot. Bring to a boil, then turn heat off. Add spice bag to the vinegar-water mixture, and let steep for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3.) Pour hot vinegar solution and spice bag over melon pieces in the bowl. Cover with a food-grade plastic lid or wrap and let stand overnight in the refrigerator (about 18 hours).

Day Two:

4.) Wash and rinse pint canning jars; keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions.

5.) Carefully pour off vinegar solution into a large 8 to 10 quart saucepan and bring to a boil. Add sugar; stir to dissolve. Add cantaloupe and bring back to a boil. Lower heat to simmer until cantaloupe pieces turn translucent; about 1 to 1¼ hours.

6.) Remove cantaloupe pieces into a medium-sized stockpot, cover and set aside. Bring remaining liquid to a boil and boil an additional 5 minutes. Return cantaloupe to the liquid syrup, and bring back to a boil.

7.) With a slotted spoon, fill hot cantaloupe pieces into clean, hot pint jars, leaving 1- inch headspace. Cover with boiling hot syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids.

8.) Process in a boiling water canner according to the recommendations in Table 1. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for properly closed seals.

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process time at altitudes of:		
		0-1,000 ft	1,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	15 min	20 min	25 min