



It's Melon Time for this TRY DAY Friday food brought to you by



What are the different types of melons?

Melons actually come from the gourd family and there are several types, but there are three which are most relevant: muskmelons, inodorous melons and watermelons.

- **Muskmelons** include cantaloupes and a range of different varieties in different parts of the country. These melons have a distinct smell, a “netted” skin and are typically harvested when the vine slips off of the fruit.
- **Inodorous melons** include varieties such as canary, casaba and honeydew as well as varieties we may not be as familiar with such as the Crenshaw and Santa Claus melon. Yes, there is even a Santa Claus melon (a.k.a. the Christmas melon)! It gets its name because of its late season harvest and can keep fresh through the holidays! These inodorous melons tend to have smoother skin and typically lack any distinct pre-cut smell.
- **Watermelons** of course need no introduction. But, there are different varieties of watermelons. Yellow watermelons are – you guessed it – yellow inside and tend to have a more mellow taste...some say they have a hint of honey. Seedless watermelons were invented over 50 years ago. They actually have seeds, but the seeds are immature, white and very soft (and are, of course, safe to eat).

How do you pick a good one?



- **Tap it! Thump it! Slap it!** If you hear a deep and thick dense sound, that is a good thing. A hollow sound can mean lack of moisture.
- **Take a whiff!** Many melons will have a stronger smell as they become ripe. Cantaloupes will have a “musky” smell, which is especially evident when they are left at room temperature (this is very evident if you leave them in a hot car!).
- **Listen up!** Muskmelons will have a slight rattle when you shake them because the center seeds will loosen when ripe.
- **Heavyweights!** Melons should feel heavy for their size. Since watermelon is made up of mostly water, the heavier the better.
- **Touch it!** Some of the inodorous melons (like the canary melon) will have a sticky or tacky feel as they ripen...this is because the sugars start to saturate the rind. These melons should be firm, except the blossom end (opposite the stem) of some melons like honeydew should have a slight give.

• **Color!** For a ripe melon, the rind will typically be dull, not shiny. With watermelons, a great way to test for ripeness is to look at the spot where the melon rested on the ground. If it is slightly yellow, this is a good sign and suggests ripeness. If it is white or pale green, it may not have ripened yet. If the watermelon has stripes, the area between the stripes should be a light green. Keep in mind, once a watermelon is harvested, it is not likely to ripen further (unlike a peach or other produce, which ripens even after being harvested).

What is the best way to store melons?

Cantaloupes are best enjoyed shortly after you get them home and it is best to keep them cool until you dive in (the refrigerator crisper is a great place to keep them). Uncut watermelons can remain at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Once they are cut, melons will generally remain good for a week if stored in a sealed covered container in the refrigerator.

Why are melons good for us?

Cantaloupes and honeydew melons are good sources of Vitamin B6, niacin and folate. Cantaloupe is also high in Vitamin A for healthy vision. Watermelons provide lycopene which have been shown to help protect against certain types of cancer. Melons overall have been proven to help aid in digestion, maintain healthy skin, prevent kidney disease, help cure acute eczema, prevent blood clots and even relieve heartburn! Pretty powerful fruit!

Enjoy this simple salsa with your favorite melon!



Canary Melon Salsa

Ingredients:

2 cups canary melon (diced)
1 avocado (peeled, pitted and diced)
1/2 cup red onion (chopped)
1/4 cup fresh cilantro (chopped)
1 jalapeño (seeds removed and chopped)
1 Tbsp lime juice (juice from one large lime)
1/4 tsp sea salt

Directions:

In a large bowl, add everything and gently toss to combine. Enjoy with your favorite tortilla chips, or makes an excellent topping for fish tacos or chicken!