

HEN HOUSE

M A R K E T

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Athena Melons and Watermelons Buffalo Island Melon Co. Jimmie and Barbara Wilkins



The Wilkins Family Farm is located in Homersville near Danklin, MO. They are the third generation of melon growers and farm 200 acres. Jimmie and Barbara have been farming here for 30 years and the farm has been in the family for over 60 years.

They produce a family hand-on product from greenhouse, planting on plastic, carefully monitoring pests and fungus, picking just at the right time for fresh market. They add cotton compost to all melon production ground. They have a pre-harvest staff of 5 and an harvest staff of 30-40.

The Wilkins grow several varieties of seedless melons. We look for varieties with higher sugar. The seed varieties include Royal Sweet type, Allsweet type, dark skin, and yellow meat.

We hope you enjoy these summer time favorites.

Storage Tips:

Whole melons can be stored on the counter for up to two days in order to soften them up but ideally they should be kept between 35-45 degrees. Cut fruit must be refrigerated at all times. Place ripe melons uncut in a plastic bag to be refrigerated for up to a week.

Food Safety:

All melons should ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS be washed with warm, soapy water before cutting them. This should remove any bacteria that is on the surface of the melon and would otherwise be pushed into the meat of the melon by the knife. Make sure you also use a clean knife and cutting board to avoid contamination from bacteria or other food-borne illnesses.

Athena Melons

Athena melons would be considered to be one of the larger varieties of cantaloupe. A typical Athena melon will weigh 5 to 7 pounds, so it will be somewhat larger in size and weight than some of the smaller varieties of muskmelon. The muskmelon, although generally considered a fruit, is actually a vegetable in the same family as squash. Musk melons, native to the Old World (Asia, Africa, and Europe) were introduced to North America in 1494 by Christopher Columbus. What we refer to as "cantaloupes" in the US are actually musk melons. Cantaloupes are primarily grown in Europe and are not commercially grown in the US.

How to choose:

Though **cantaloupes** will ripen (get softer and more juicy) after harvest, they will not get sweeter. The best way to judge a good melon is to look at the "slip", which is the indentation where the melon was picked from the vine. A full circular indentation or "full slip" indicates that the melon was mature enough to almost fall off the vine. On the other hand, the presence of a stem still attached to the melon is a sign of immaturity. The second thing you should notice when selecting cantaloupe is the distinctive sweet musky aroma. If it smells sweet, it will taste sweet. Conversely, if the musk melon has no odor or smells like a cucumber, then that is how it will taste. The third thing to look at is the blossom end (opposite the stem end), it should yield slightly to moderate pressure.

When choosing a whole **watermelon**, look for one that is heavy for its size with a rind that is relatively smooth and that is neither overly shiny nor overly dull. In addition, one side of the melon should have an area that is distinct in color from the rest of the rind, displaying a yellowish or creamy tone. This is the underbelly, the place that was resting on the ground during ripening, and if the fruit does not have this marking, it may have been harvested prematurely, which will negatively affect its taste, texture and juiciness.

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Quick Serving Ideas for melons:

- When serving, add a little lemon or lime juice to enhance the flavor of the fruit.
- Add some sparkling water to fresh squeezed cantaloupe juice for a delightfully refreshing drink in the warm months of the year.
- In a blender or food processor, purée cantaloupe and peeled soft peaches to make delicious cold soup. Add lemon juice and honey to taste.
- Top cantaloupe slices with yogurt and chopped mint.
- Slice melons in half horizontally, scoop out seeds and use each half as a basket in which to serve fruit salad.
- Purée watermelon, cantaloupe and kiwi together. Swirl in a little plain yogurt and serve as refreshing cold soup.
- In Asian countries, roasted watermelon seeds are either seasoned and eaten as a snack food or ground up into cereal and used to make bread.
- A featured item of Southern American cooking, the rind of watermelon can be marinated, pickled or candied.
- Watermelon mixed with thinly sliced red onion, salt and black pepper makes a great summer salad. Fruit salad can be made days ahead since cut fruit, if chilled, retains its nutrients for at least 6 days.

Nutrition Facts

Watermelon

- ✓ One cup of diced watermelon provides 21% vitamin C and 17% vitamin A and is 91.4% water.
- ✓ It has an estimated glycemic load of 3.
- ✓ One cup of diced watermelon has 45.6 calories, 11.5g carb, 9.4g sugar and 0.6g fiber
- ✓ Watermelon is a rich source of lycopene, which is a type of carotenoid. Carotenoids have [antioxidant](#) activity. Several researches have reported an association between dietary lycopene consumption and lower incidence in diseases such as prostate and oral cancers. Lycopene may also help reduce risks of cardiovascular disease.



Cantaloupe - Consumption of cantaloupe contains 80% of the RDA for vitamin C. Cantaloupes are also a good source of beta carotene and contain polyphenol antioxidants, which are known to benefit the cardiovascular and immune systems. These antioxidants play an important role in the prevention of heart attacks and promoting healthy blood vessels.

Athena Melon Rings with Honey-Thyme Chicken Salad by Chef Mark Alan Mollentine - GNFF Chef

A terrific tasting, simple summer salad, perfect for a patio luncheon.

makes 3 cups
3/4 cup mayonnaise
2 oz. GNFF honey
1/4 t. white pepper
1/2 t. salt
2 t. onion powder
1 t. garlic powder
1/4 t. dried thyme
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
2 cups, cooked, cubed GNFF chicken breast
1 GNFF Athena Melon
1/2 lb. mixed greens

In a bowl, combine the first seven ingredients. Mix in celery and chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour to chill. Slice the Athena melon into 3/4 inch slices. Using round cookie cutters or a knife, first remove the center seeds, then the outside rind. Chill until ready to serve. Divide mixed greens onto plates, top with a melon ring, place a scoop of chicken salad onto center of melon ring. Serve with Farm to Market bread or whole wheat crackers.