



# Watermelon



## How do watermelons grow?

Watermelons grow best in sandy soil. Watermelons grow on vines that grow quickly and spread along the ground. The leaves are large with deeply notched edges. The small flowers are yellow and grow in the area between the leaf and the stem. Each flower on a watermelon vine produces either pollen or fruit. Two to fifteen fruits may grow on each vine. The fruits can be picked within about 90 days. The fruits vary in size, shape, and color, depending on the type of watermelon. Large watermelons can weigh 25 to 40 pounds (11 to 18 kilograms) or more.



Smaller varieties weigh from 3 to 10 pounds (1.4 to 4.5 kilograms). The flesh may be red, pink, or yellow. The rind may be thick or thin and varies in colour from light to dark green, with or without green stripes. Some watermelons have small, flat, dark seeds, while others are seedless. Seedless varieties have soft, white, undeveloped seeds in the flesh. A watermelon is ripe when its underside, which sits on the soil, is creamy yellow instead of green or white. Watermelons do not ripen after they are picked, so for maximum flavor they should be picked when mature. Overripe watermelons have a mealy texture. Melons are cut from the vine by hand and can be stored for about two weeks.

Check out this 1.32 minute video on how watermelons grow in Canada

<https://canadianfoodfocus.org/on-the-farm/how-watermelons-grow-in-canada/> and one from Chromczak Farms - Fresh Ontario Watermelon Growers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi8F6UuEMPo>

### Joke Corner

Q: What is the only time you start at the red and stop at the green?

A: When you eat a watermelon!

# Where did watermelon come from?

Watermelon was first grown in Africa over 5000 years ago, before it made its way to Mediterranean countries and later Europe. Today, watermelons are grown on every continent except Antarctica. The plants grow best in areas with long, warm growing seasons. Ontario grown watermelons are available from July to September.

## Did you know?

- Watermelon is part of the gourd family, related to cucumber, pumpkin, and squash.
- A watermelon is both a fruit and a vegetable.
- A watermelon is named as such because it is mostly water - 92%- a tasty way to stay hydrated during the summer or sports.
- Watermelon can be eaten entirely, rind and seeds too! While many people prefer seedless watermelon, black watermelon seeds are edible and actually quite healthy. They contain iron, zinc, protein, and fiber. Try the pickled watermelon rind recipe below.

## Recipe - Watermelon Rind Pickles



### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups water
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- 2 cups peeled watermelon rind (leave a thin layer of pink), cut into 1x1/2x2 inch pieces
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 4 black peppercorns
- 4 whole cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon whole allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon pickling spice
- 1 long slice of fresh ginger

### DIRECTIONS:

- In large pot, bring water and salt to boil over medium high heat. Add rind pieces and boil until tender, about 5 minutes. Strain. Transfer rinds to a large metal bowl.
- In saucepan, combine sugar, cider vinegar, peppercorns, cloves, allspice, pickling spice and ginger. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Simmer for 15 minutes., until slightly reduced. Pour over watermelon rinds in bowl. Place plate over top to keep rinds submerged in liquid. Cover and refrigerate for one day. Transfer to a glass jar and keep sealed in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.