



Cantaloupe Information Sheet

Purchasing Specifications

Specifications should state grade, type, size, and quantity. Select an appropriate grade for the intended use. Cantaloupes should have well defined netting and have a light green to turning yellow rind color with bright orange flesh. No more than 12% should have defects that make cantaloupes unusable, and no more than 2% should be affected by decay.

U.S. Grades

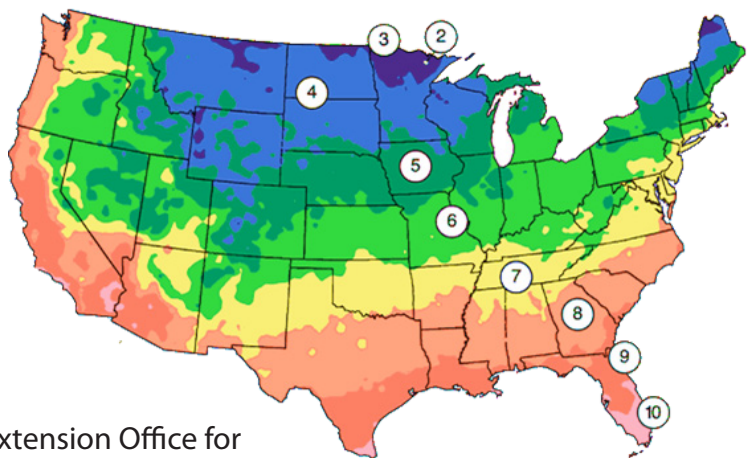
- U.S. Fancy - Well-formed, well-netted with the highest requirement (11%) for internal quality.
- U.S. No. 1* - Well-formed, well-netted with a requirement of 9% for internal quality.
- U.S. Commercial - No internal quality requirement.
- U.S. No. 2 - No internal quality requirement.

Internal quality requirement: The combined juice from the edible portion of a sample of cantaloupes selected at random contains no less than 11% (U.S. Fancy) and 9% (U.S. No.1) soluble solids as determined by an approved hand refractometer.

*U.S. No. 1 consists of cantaloupes of one type that are mature and have good internal quality but are not overripe, soft, or wilted. Cantaloupes are well-formed, well-netted, and free from decay, wet slip, and sunscald. Cantaloupes are free from damage caused by liquid in the seed cavity, sunburn, hail, dirt, surface mold or other disease, aphids or other insects, scars, cracks, sunken areas, ground spot, bruises, or mechanical or other means.

Domestic Harvest

- 2, 3, 4: August - September
- 5, 6: July - October
- 7: June - September
- 8, 9: May - July
- 10: April - June



Check with your county or state Cooperative Extension Office for specific information regarding cantaloupe production in your area.

Sizing

Cantaloupes are sized according to the number packed in a 40 pound box. The most typical sizes/number per box are 9, 12, 15 and 18 - with the 9 being the largest individual size and 18 the smallest.



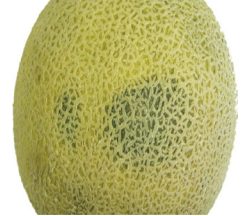
Cantaloupe Information Sheet, continued

Receiving Guidelines

Desirable Characteristics



Acceptable Color and Shape

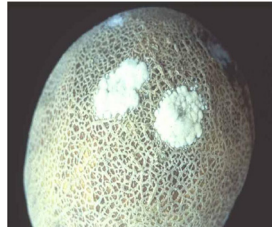


Acceptable Discoloration

Product Defects



Bruise



Mold



Sunken Areas and Scars



Decay

- No other external defect should extend into the flesh.

Storing and Handling Guidelines

- Store cantaloupes ideally at 36 to 41 °F with a relative humidity of 95%. Under these conditions, cantaloupes are acceptable for up to 3 weeks. Cantaloupes stored at refrigeration temperatures below 41 °F will have approximate shelf life of up to 5 days. Cantaloupe may be held in dry storage at temperatures below 75 °F for up to 2 days.
- Do not transport or store with ethylene gas sensitive products such as green leafy vegetables. Cantaloupes produce ethylene that may cause damage and reduce shelf life of sensitive produce.
- Avoid using whole melons that have visible signs of decay or damaged rinds (such as mechanical damage or cracking) due to the increased risk that harmful bacteria may have contaminated the melons.
- Wash the outer surface of the melon thoroughly under cold, running water. Scrub melons with a clean produce brush before cutting. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
- Cover, date, and refrigerate cut cantaloupe. Use by the following day for best quality.
- Hold and serve cantaloupe at 41 °F. Do not store cut melon at room temperature. If possible, display cut melons in a refrigerated case, not just on top of ice. Take and record serving line temperatures.
- Discard cut cantaloupe after 2 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F to 135 °F).
- Check for ripeness by looking for the stem end to be hollowed inward or concave. The cantaloupe will yield to light pressure and have a sweet, musky aroma.