



Watermelon Information Sheet

Purchasing Specifications

Specifications should state grade, type, size, and quantity. Watermelons should be firm and symmetrical. The underside of the watermelon should have a creamy yellow spot from where it sat on the ground to ripen. No more than 12% should have defects that make watermelons unusable, and no more than 2% should be affected by decay.

Measure	Weight in Pounds
Small	Up to 12
Medium	12 to 20
Large	Over 20

U.S. Grades

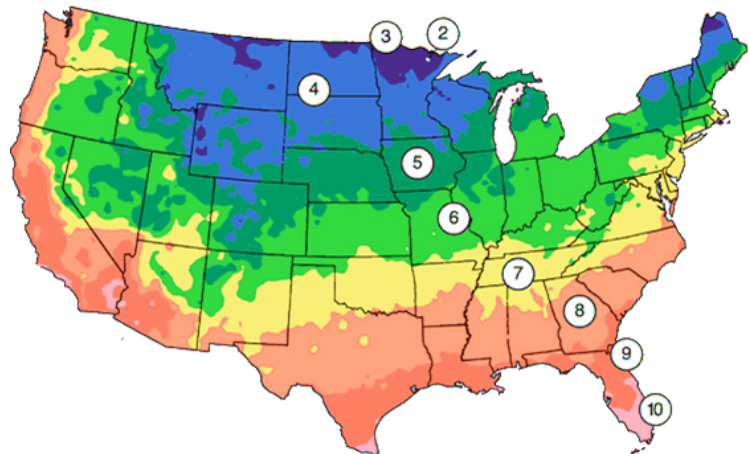
- U.S. Fancy - Very few defects are permitted.
- U.S. No. 1* - Greater number of defects permitted compared to the U.S. Fancy Grade.
- U.S. No. 2 - Greater areas of defects are allowed compared to higher grades; off-shape is permitted.
- Watermelons can be round or oblong. Round watermelon is more common commercially.
- The most common varieties of watermelons are Jubilee and Crimson Sweet.
- Seedless watermelons have fewer than 10 mature (brown to black) seeds visible when the watermelon is cut into 4 equal pieces.

*U.S. No. 1 consists of watermelons that are mature, have similar varietal characteristics, are fairly well formed, and are not overripe. Watermelons should be free from sunken lesions, decay, sunscald, and damage by other means.

Domestic Harvest

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

*California available year around.



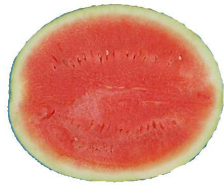
Domestic harvest begins in April and will continue through October in a few of the southern states, with the greatest crop yield in the summer months. Check with your county or state Cooperative Extension Office for specific information regarding watermelon production in your area.



Watermelon Information Sheet, continued

Receiving Guidelines

Desirable Characteristics



- Acceptable color, shape, striping, and ground spot.
- Watermelons should be sweet to taste and have a uniform pinkish to red flesh color.

Product Defects



Overripe



Hollow Heart



Bruise



Decay

- Watermelon flesh should not feel mushy or stringy.

Storing and Handling Guidelines

- Watermelon stored at 50 to 60 °F with a relative humidity of 90% will be acceptable for up to 3 weeks. Watermelons held in dry storage below 75 °F will have approximate shelf life of up to 10 days. If dry storage temperatures are above 75 °F, shelf life will decline to 5 days. At temperatures between 32 and 45 °F, watermelons are subject to chilling injury that may result in pitting, off-flavors, and color loss.
- Watermelons may become mushy and shelf life may be reduced when exposed to ethylene gas producing fruit such as apples, stone fruits, and grapes.
- Store watermelons at 41 °F or below for up to 24 hours prior to cutting to reduce the amount of time it takes cut melon to cool to 41 °F.
- Whole melons with visible signs of decay or damaged rinds (such as mechanical damage or cracking) have an increased risk of containing harmful bacteria.
- Wash the outer surface of the watermelon thoroughly under cool, running tap water. Scrub melons with a clean produce brush before cutting. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
- Cover, date, and refrigerate cut watermelon. Use by the following day for best quality.
- Hold and serve watermelon at 41 °F. Do not store cut watermelon 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 watermelon after 2 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F to 135 °F).