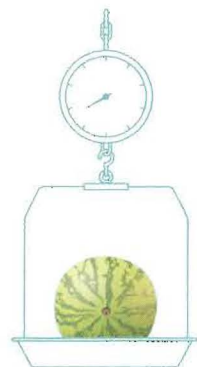
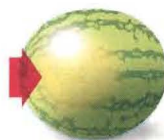


MASTERING THE MELON

What you need to know to buy and prep these beautiful fruits



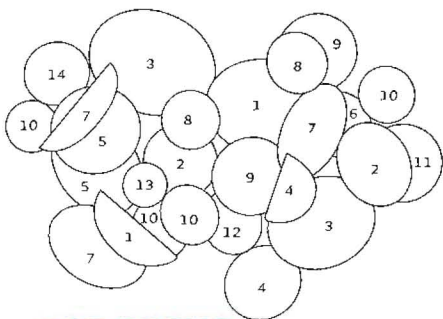
HOW TO CHOOSE A GOOD ONE

GIVE IT THE ONCE-OVER Symmetrical? Check. No bruises? Check. No soggy areas? Check.

FIND THE COUCHE (coosh). That's the flat spot where the melon rested on the ground. If it doesn't have one, it was harvested too early.

LOCATE THE "FULL SLIP," or belly button, where the melon attached to the vine. It should be smooth and clean, a sign it was ripe enough to detach on its own.

LIFT IT Does it somehow seem heavier than it looks? Good; that means it's juicy.



TOP PICKS

Prime melon season is July through September.

WATERMELON FAMILY

- 1] **CRIMSON SWEET:** Crisp, sweet, and mild, with medium red flesh.
- 2] **MICKEY LEE:** Red flesh with a clean taste and slightly grainy texture.
- 3] **MOON AND STARS:** Bright to pinkish-red flesh and a sweet-tart flavor.
- 4] **NEW ORCHID:** Pale orange flesh and a rich, honey-like flavor.
- 5] **YELLOW DOLL:** Yellow flesh; slightly tart.

MUSK & LATE-HARVEST MELON FAMILY

- 6] **AMBROSIA:** Sweet, floral, and deeply flavorful orange flesh
- 7] **CANARY:** Dense green flesh with a sweet flavor that's musky in a good way, like grapes.
- 8] **CHARENTAIS:** Deep orange and juicy, with a flowery aroma.
- 9] **EEL RIVER:** Supersoft texture, gentle flavor, and elegant perfume; orange flesh.
- 10] **HA-OGEN:** Chin-drippingly juicy, with slightly savory, tropical flavors and pale green flesh.
- 11] **HONEYLOUPE:** Hybrid that tastes and looks like a cross between cantaloupe and honeydew; bright orange, sweet, and juicy.
- 12] **GALIA:** As sweet, juicy, and succulent as a summer peach, with soft green flesh.
- 13] **GREEN NUTMEG:** Tiny, single-serving melon. A bit spicy, with bright green flesh.
- 14] **TUSCAN:** Earthy, clean flavor with hints of cucumber. Rich, amber-colored flesh.



No. We think Mother Nature had it right; seed-studded melons are juicier and more flavorful. Plus, you can plant heirloom seeds to keep the variety alive (just one type, to prevent cross-pollination).

RIPEN IT

If your melon doesn't smell strong and fruity, let it sit a day or two to ripen before you cut into it (the exception is watermelon—it doesn't ripen after picking).



MELON ON-THE-GO: A great way to cool a melon after a long car ride to your campsite or picnic area is to put it in a clean, fast-flowing creek.



3 WAYS TO CUT

Always wash the outside of a melon before cutting.

» **CUT DOWN THROUGH THE MIDDLE,** then put halves, flat sides down, on a work surface and slice. Halve the slices to make wedges, or cut into cubes.

» **TRIM ENDS,** then stand melon up. Cut off rind, following the curve of the fruit. Cut into slices and/or cubes.

» **PLACE MELON ON ITS SIDE,** then use a mallet to tap the blade of a big knife into the middle of the fruit until it starts to crack. Cut the melon into whatever shapes you like. This method is especially useful for large melons.