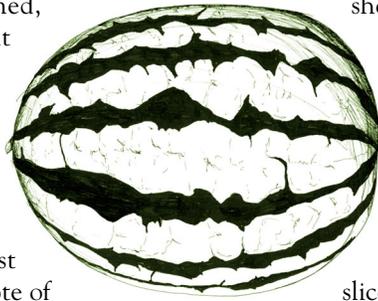


Melons

At last—melons! A relative of cucumbers, melons are botanically classified as fruits. The farm team loves to eat the sun-warmed, vine-ripened melons that come straight from our fields. And eat them they do! Under the pretense of research, the crew dives into a few melons at the beginning of every harvest, equipped with eager taste buds and a refractometer—a device used to measure the sweetness in fruits. They identify the sweetest and best melons of their sample, take note of ripeness cues—like coloration, size, stem slip, and “thump”—and harvest accordingly. Next to cutting into and tasting each melon, this is the best way to harvest the sweetest melons possible.



STORAGE

If your muskmelon, honeydew, or butterscotch melon seems a bit short of ripe, keep it at room temperature for a few days or until there is a sweet smell coming from the stem end. Once the melon ripens, store it in the refrigerator.

Handle watermelons carefully. When harvested at their peak ripeness, they can crack or split easily if bumped or roughly handled. Refrigerate watermelons right away. (Watermelons do not ripen off the vine and do not emanate a ripe smell.)

Cut melon should be covered in plastic wrap, chunks or slices should be kept in an airtight container, and both should be refrigerated. Eat all melons within a week.

HANDLING

A big knife and a large cutting surface are useful, especially for watermelons. Giving yourself plenty of room, cut the melon in half from stem to blossom end. Scoop out the seeds of muskmelons, butterscotch, or honeydews. If you'd like, you can cut the melon further into quarters or slices, or peel it and cut it into cubes for snacking.

Overheard

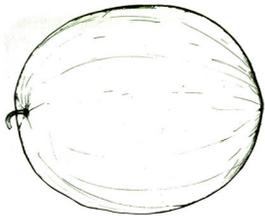
I cut up the melon. It was yellow. It was the most fun I have had in a long time. I love cutting melons.

Cantaloupe and Tomato Salad with Mint

This salad is best with sweet heirloom tomatoes or the low-acid yellow tomatoes, but any very ripe tomato will do. It's a superb accompaniment to any backyard barbeque. *Angelic Organics Kitchen*. Serves 4



- 1/2 small cantaloupe, balled or cut in 1-inch pieces (about 1 cup)
- 2 small tomatoes, cut into thin wedges (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cucumber, peeled, diced (about 1 cup)
- 1 large rib celery, diced (about 3/4 cup)
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh mint plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- salt
- freshly ground black pepper



1. Combine the cantaloupe, tomatoes, cucumber, and celery in a large salad bowl.

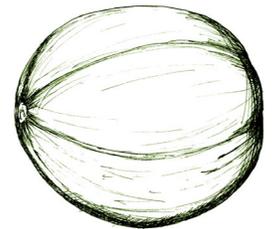
2. Whisk the yogurt, mint, sherry vinegar, honey, and lemon juice in a small bowl.

3. Pour the dressing over the melon salad and toss until well combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste; garnish with mint leaves.

Ginger Melon Sorbet

This is the perfect celebration of the cantaloupe—sweet and gingery, wholly refreshing, and a great palate cleanser after a heavy meal. Don't skip the ginger; it makes this recipe shine. Sorbet from the store will never taste the same again! *Angelic Organics Kitchen*. Serves 4

- 1 medium cantaloupe (3 to 3 1/2 pounds), cut into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated ginger
- fresh mint leaves (optional)



1. Combine the melon, sugar, and lemon juice in a blender or food processor and purée just until smooth. Add the ginger and pulse briefly to combine.

2. Transfer the mixture to an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's directions. (If you don't have an ice cream maker, pour the mixture into a tray or zip-top bag and freeze it on a flat surface in your freezer. Remove the frozen mixture from the freezer and let it thaw out, then return it to the blender or food processor and process again until smooth. Repeat this process at least once more (two times total does the trick) or until the mixture is very smooth and blended with no separation.

3. Spoon into individual glasses or serving dishes and garnish with mint leaves.

Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook.

