

Watermelon

Late June and early July is the perfect time of year to enjoy watermelon. Its sweetness is restorative for heat induced fatigue. Its cold nature and beta-carotene calms your liver, easing frustration. In the summer, your heart beats faster to regulate body temperature, an effect called heart heat in Chinese medicine. Watermelon's calming effect on your spirit relieves the restlessness and impulsivity of too much heart heat.

Reduce Water Weight, Puffy Skin, & Swelling

On hot, humid days you might feel puffy and swollen, especially if your lymphatic system is congested. Even your ankles will get swollen with the heat. Watermelon is 92% water and 6% sugar. Although the large fruit might be a tempting way to relieve dehydration, watermelon's juiciness only quenches thirst temporarily. Those who suffer from water retention will be happy to hear that, ultimately, watermelon dries the body and reduces summer swelling because of high levels of potassium, a diuretic. As it purges extra fluids from your body, watermelon leaves you feeling light and refreshed.

The dryness and low calories in this festive fruit are ideal for those trying to lose weight. Watermelon also has a surprising ability to reduce insulin resistance.

Note: Summer swelling is called damp heat in Chinese medicine. Ayurveda describes damp heat as the hot, sour, spreading, & liquid nature of pitta.

Cleanse Your Urinary Tract

The more you sweat, the less you pee. Your risk for urinary tract infections (UTI) and bladder stones increases with summer heat. As you sweat more, urine thickens to a dark yellow. When it sits too long in your bladder urine becomes turbid. The foul, and often sour smelling urine irritates the bladder and urinary tract. Concentrated urine also forms stones more easily.

Watermelon flushes and cleanses your urinary tract by its diuretic action. Its cooling quality reduces inflammation. Pay attention to the color and quantity of your urine. When you notice it has returned to a light yellow color and is more copious, you will know that you are reducing your risk of a urinary tract infection this summer. Be sure to drink lots of water when cleansing your urinary tract with watermelon.

Watermelon fundamentally cools the body and restores balance to overheated blood. High in beta-carotene, watermelon substantially balances the blood. As beta-carotene in carrots "brightens the eye", 1.5 servings of watermelon daily has been shown to reduce age related macular degeneration (ARMD) by 36%. Watermelon contains abundant amounts of the antioxidant's lycopene and vitamin C.

Buying & Preparation

If the watermelon is cut, select one by looking at the color and quality of the flesh. It should be a deep color without white streaks. If it has seeds, they should be dark in color. If the watermelon is not cut, look for a watermelon that is heavy for its size and sounds hollow

when tapped on the side. Check for existence of the white underbelly, where the watermelon sat on the ground. If the white underbelly is missing, it is a sign that the watermelon was harvested before fully ripening.

Wash the watermelon and dry it before cutting it. Once cut, the watermelon should be refrigerated. Cover in plastic wrap to avoid dehydration and absorption of odors from other food.

Cooking Watermelon

The flesh is featured in fruit salads, paired with spices like cayenne, and served at summer barbecues, such as on the fourth of July, where the juice is more than likely to end up on the cheeks of happy children. Although most people are accustomed to eating the sweet red fleshy parts only, the seeds and white part of the rind are also edible. The seeds are roasted, seasoned, and eaten as a snack food, ground up into cereal, or used to make bread in Asian countries.

Ground up melon seeds are used in the traditional version of 'horchata de melon', a drink of melon juice and seeds. The melon seeds are blended with the flesh, left to sit for a half hour, then strained and served. The melon seeds thicken the drink slightly, as well as contributing oils and proteins.

Most organisms store toxins in the skin. If you plan to eat the rind, buy organic watermelons. The rind of watermelon is featured in Southern American cooking, where it is marinated, pickled, or candied. It is stir-fried and stewed in China.

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