Purchasing

- Select whole watermelons that are symmetrical in shape, heavy for their size and free of bruises, cuts and dents.

- A ripe watermelon will have a creamy yellow spot on its underside where it sat on the ground during ripening. Avoid those with a white spot as this indicates the melon was picked early.

- Cut watermelons should have dense, firm, brightly colored flesh and black seeds. Avoid any with white seeds and grainy pale flesh.

- Refrigerate whole melons for up to 1 week. Not only does it taste better cold, but chilling prevents the flesh from becoming dry and fibrous.

- Refrigerate cut melon in plastic wrap or airtight plastic containers for up to 2 days.

Preparing

- Wash outside of whole watermelon before cutting. To make wedges, cut melon lengthwise into halves. Cut each half crosswise into quarters and each quarter into 3 or 4 wedges.

- Use a gadget called a melon baler to scoop perfectly shaped spheres from watermelon halves. The melon balls make a pretty addition to fruit salads.

- To easily cube watermelon, cut the ends off. Stand melon up on one flattened end and use sharp knife to cut off rind in strips from top to bottom. Cut peeled melon crosswise into slices. Stack a few slices and cut them into cubes.

Nutrition

- Good source of vitamins A and C.
- Naturally fat and sodium free.
Recipes

Fresh Watermelon Spring Salsa
- 1 1/2 cups chopped watermelon
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 2 tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 2 tbsp. Italian dressing
- 2 tsp minced Serrano chile
- 1/4 tsp salt

Mix all ingredients until well blended. Serve spooned over cooked fish.

Water Melon Fruit Bowl
- 1 qt (4 cups) boiling water
- 2 pkg 8oz. Sugar free gelatin, any flavor
- 1 qt (4 cups) cold water
- 4 cups assorted summer fruits, such as watermelon balls, honeydew balls, banana slices, strawberry slices
- Watermelon bowl (see below)

Stir boiling water into dry gelatin in large bowl 3 minutes or until gelatin is completely dissolved. Stir in cold water. Refrigerate 1-1/2 hours or until thickened (spoon drawn through leaved definite impression). Add fruit; stir until well blended. Spoon into watermelon bowl. Refrigerate 3 hours or until firm.

Watermelon bowl: Select a large round watermelon. Cut off a thin slice from bottom of melon. Cut off top 1/3 of melon. Use sharp knife to scallop edge of larger piece, if desired. Scoop out fruit from both pieces with a melon baler. Invert watermelon shell on paper towels; let stand to drain excess juices before filling with fruited gelatin. Mix desired amount of watermelon with fruits before adding to gelatin as directed. Reserve remaining watermelon for snacking or another use.

Fruity Lemonade Cooler
- 2 cups water
- 1/2 cup lemonade flavor drink mix
- 2 cups chopped seedless watermelon
- 1 cup ice cubes

Place all ingredients in blender, cover. Blend on high speed until smooth. Pour into four glasses to serve.

Serving Ideas
- Toss watermelon balls or cubes into salads for extra color and flavor.
- Jazz up your favorite gelatin mold by stirring in watermelon chunks along with other fruits.
- Thread watermelon balls or chunks onto small bamboo skewers along with other summer fruits for colorful kabobs. Serve with a yogurt dip.
- Replace some of the fruit in your favorite fruit salsa with chopped watermelon.
- Add eye appeal and great flavor to summer punches by stirring in juicy, pink watermelon cubes.