

CANTALOUPE



CANTALOUPEs were named after the Italian city Cantalupo. Cantaloupes grow on vines and when perfectly ripe, the fruit has a raised netting on a grayish-beige skin. The pale orange flesh is extremely juicy and sweet. You can find cantaloupes in the Northeast during the summer months. Cantaloupe can be used in recipes, but remember that it is also delicious enjoyed plain!

SELECTION

- ◆ Choose cantaloupes that are **heavy** for their size, and have a **sweet fruity fragrance** at the blossom end.
- ◆ Avoid cantaloupes that are shriveled, bruised, punctured, or have cracked rinds.

STORAGE

- ◆ Keep **uncut** cantaloupe in the refrigerator for up to **5 days**. Keep away from other fruit because melons emit a gas that speeds up the ripening of other kinds of fruit.
- ◆ When storing a **halved** melon, **leave the seeds inside** to help keep it fresh.
- ◆ **Cut** cantaloupe should be **wrapped in plastic** and refrigerated for up to **3 days**.
- ◆ **To freeze**, scoop out melon balls with a spoon or ice cream scoop and place in an airtight plastic container in the freezer.

Nutritional Information

There is 100% of the vitamin A, 80% of the vitamin C, 10% of the folate, and 8% of the potassium recommended daily in a quarter wedge of a medium sized cantaloupe. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Potassium is a mineral necessary for proper nerve and muscle function, as well as blood pressure regulation. A healthy diet with enough folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with certain birth defects of the brain or spinal chord.

Cantaloupe Recipes

Cantaloupe Salsa (Serves 4)

1/2 cantaloupe, peeled, seeded, and diced small
3/4 cup red bell pepper, finely diced
1/4 cup cilantro, finely chopped
3 Tablespoons scallions, finely chopped
2 Tablespoons lime juice
pinch of hot pepper flakes

Put cantaloupe, red pepper, cilantro, scallions, and lime juice in a bowl and stir. Add a pinch of pepper flakes and put into the refrigerator until cold. Try eating the salsa on chicken, fish, or steaks.

Recipe adapted from www.aboutproduce.com.



Chilled Cantaloupe Soup (Serves 4)

2 medium cantaloupes, seeded, peeled and cut into chunks
8 ripe sweet red or purple plums
8 ripe sweet apricots
4 fresh sprigs of mint
twist of lemon

Put cantaloupe chunks and lemon into a blender or food processor in batches and puree completely. Transfer to a large bowl. Remove pits from plums and apricots, and puree separately. Transfer each puree to a small bowl. To serve, ladle cantaloupe puree into individual soup bowls. Add a small ladle of plum puree and apricot puree to the center. Gently swirl with a large spoon or fork. Garnish center with a sprig of mint.

Recipe adapted from Zel Allen's cookbook, [Vegetarians in Paradise](http://www.vegparadise.com/cookingwith8.html) found at <http://www.vegparadise.com/cookingwith8.html>



Sweet and Sour Cantaloupe (Serves 6)

1 medium cantaloupe, peeled, seeded, and diced
1 cup sugar or honey
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup water
salt and pepper to taste

Place cantaloupe in shallow bowl. Combine sugar or honey, ginger, vinegar, salt, pepper, and water in a small saucepan; heat to boiling. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain over cantaloupe, toss to combine. Cover and chill for several hours.

Recipe adapted from www.thefruitpages.com. The Fruit Pages 2002.

