

Food for Thought

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From Shannon, your Grand Island Hy-Vee dietitian

Ward Off Wrinkles with Watermelon

During the summer, you probably stock up on sunscreen, sunglasses, hats and cover-ups to protect your skin from the sun. But did you know another way to battle the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays can be found right in the produce aisle of your supermarket?

As it turns out, watermelon, as well as ruby red grapefruit and tomatoes, are all rich in lycopene. This powerful antioxidant found in reddish-colored fruits tends to act as a natural sunscreen. It actually protects skin cells from the sun's burning rays which can lead to premature aging and even skin cancer, and replenishes them. In addition, lycopene helps your skin act as a natural filter, allowing enough sunlight through for your body to produce vitamin D. Besides helping to prevent sunburns, lycopene can also help prevent wrinkles. It strengthens the elasticity of skin tissues while keeping them from losing their tension. Lycopene is also an important antioxidant for preventing heart disease and cancer.

To increase lycopene absorption from food, serve it with a bit of oil such as salad dressing or olive oil. Best picks for lycopene include cooked tomato products such as tomato soup, tomato juice, spaghetti sauce and canned tomato sauce and watermelon, ruby red grapefruit and guava.

As the name implies, watermelon is 92% water but it is also filled with other good nutrients. In addition to lycopene, it is an excellent source of vitamin A which helps keep eyes healthy. Watermelon also contains four B-vitamins that help produce energy needed for the exercise enthusiast and provides over half the daily need for vitamin C.

It is easy to pick a perfect melon. Once a watermelon is harvested from the vine, it will no longer ripen or sweeten. Keep these three tips in mind to pick a sweet-tasting melon.

- **LOOK** – Choose a melon with an even shape and free from bruises, cuts or dents.
- **LIFT** – Melons are mostly water, so pick a heavy one.
- **TURN IT OVER** - The underside of the watermelon should have a yellow belly from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun.

Whole watermelon can be stored at room temperature for up to one week. Before cutting or slicing, wash the watermelon rind with running water to help remove any bacteria that may be on the surface. Watermelon that has been cut should be loosely wrapped, refrigerated and eaten within a few days.

Try some creative ways to enjoy the many benefits of watermelon this summer by making a watermelon fizz or frosted watermelon. Visit www.watermelon.org for more fun ways to use watermelon!

Source: *The National Watermelon Promotion Board*

Watermelon Smoothies

Source: www.hy-vee.com

All you need:

- 2 cups seedless watermelon chunks
- 1 cup ice cubes
- 1 container (6 oz) light lemon yogurt
- 2 T. granulated sugar, Splenda, or Truvia

All you do:

1. Place all ingredients in blender. Blend on High for 30-45 seconds or until ice cubes are blended.
2. Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving time



Frosted Watermelon

All you need:

- 1 watermelon seedless, cut into 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick slices
- 1 serving yogurt
- 1 serving granola or similar cereal

All you do:

1. Using your favorite cookie cutters cut shapes out of a 1/2- to 3/4-inch thick slices of seedless watermelon. Or, if you prefer, use classic cut watermelon wedges.
2. Frost with vanilla or other flavor yogurt. Sprinkle with granola.

Alaska Sockeye Salmon

These days, everywhere you turn, you hear health professionals encouraging consumption of “fatty fish,” like salmon, due to their omega-3 fats and associated health benefits. Fatty fish are a rich source of DHA and EPA omega-3 fats which are associated with a lower risk of heart disease and may be beneficial in conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, eczema, asthma, depression and bipolar disorder. Additionally, omega-3 fats are critical in the formation of the brain and eyes of developing fetuses.

It’s easy to understand why we’d all benefit from regularly (at least twice per week) consuming fatty fish. Fatty fish, like salmon, are an excellent source of high-quality protein, and are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. A serving of salmon contains more Vitamin D than a glass of milk, another nutrient many of us are lacking in. There is no better time to start eating salmon than right now because it’s Alaska salmon season!

Alaska sockeye salmon are considered the best and are prized by high-end restaurants for their succulent, rich, flavorful and silky flesh. Why are these salmon so spectacular? All wild salmon are born in freshwater and migrate to the salty seas to mature. Eventually, they return to their home streams to spawn - and because they stop eating prior to and during the trip, they must store extra fat to fuel egg production and provide energy during the trip.

So how should you cook this super-delicious fish? Simply. Alaska sockeye salmon is so delicious you’ll want to let the flavor shine in all its glory. Roasting is the perfect method to bring out the best of the fish’s natural flavor. The method outlined here is nearly foolproof. An initial blast of high heat kick-starts the browning process and kills any bacteria, and then a lower, gentle heat cooks the salmon to perfect doneness without drying out the edges. For all you foodies out there who want something less simple, try a few of the flavor combos listed as variations.

Basic Cooking Instructions:

Oven-Roasted Salmon Fillets

All you need:

4 (6-ounce) skin-on wild Alaskan salmon fillets, about 1-½-inches thick
2 teaspoons olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
Lemon wedges, for serving

All you do:

1. Adjust oven rack to the lowest position and place a rimmed baking sheet on the rack. Heat the oven to 500 degrees.
2. Score the salmon: Use a sharp or serrated knife to cut four or five shallow slashes (about 1 inch apart), through the skin of each piece of salmon. Be careful not to cut into the flesh of the salmon.
3. Pat the salmon dry with paper towels. Rub the fillets evenly with oil and season with salt and pepper, to taste.
4. Reduce oven temperature to 275 degrees and remove the baking sheet. Carefully place the salmon, skin-side down, on the hot baking sheet and immediately return to the oven.
5. Roast until the fish flakes apart when gently prodded with a paring knife, 9-13 minutes.
6. Gently transfer the fish to individual plates and serve with the lemon wedges.

Variations:

Oven-Roasted Salmon with Avocado, Tomato & Mango Salsa: Combine 1 diced avocado, 2/3 cup chopped mango, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 1 tablespoon fresh chopped cilantro and ¼ teaspoon salt. Top roasted salmon with mango salsa and serve.

Salsa recipe adapted from: www.californiaavocado.com

Oven-Roasted Salmon with Horseradish, Walnut and Herbs:

Combine 5 tablespoons creamy horseradish, 2/3 cup finely chopped walnuts, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (such as chives, parsley, dill and/or tarragon) and 2 tablespoons softened Promise or Smart Balance spread. Prepare salmon as directed above, through step 3. Roast salmon for 5 minutes, remove from oven and spread mixture evenly over salmon fillets. Return to oven and continue roasting for an additional 6 to 8 minutes, until fish flakes apart when gently prodded with a paring knife. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

Horseradish topping adapted from: www.AlaskaSeafood.org

Oven-Roasted Salmon with Sol-I-Mar Rub: Combine 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt, 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds, 1 teaspoon dried minced onion, ½ teaspoon dried orange peel, ½ teaspoon ground ginger, ½ teaspoon cilantro, ½ teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning and ½ teaspoon dried basil. Stir well to combine. Rub 1 to 2 teaspoons rub mixture onto each side of the salmon fillets. Allow to rest for 5 minutes. Proceed with step 3, as directed above.

Salmon rub recipe adapted from: www.AlaskaSeafood.org