LYCOPENE LEADER

watermelon

Red watermelon is a good source of lycopene, a phytonutrient that gives watermelon its color. Lycopene is an antioxidant that helps protect the body against conditions such as heart disease, inflammation and some cancers.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Watermelon is free of fat, sodium and cholesterol, is a good source of vitamin C and contains vitamin A.
- Grown in the western parts of the state, from north Collier County to Columbia County, watermelon from Florida is available from late March until mid-July.
- Watermelons are 92 percent water.
- Early explorers used watermelons as canteens.

WELLNESS TIP

Plan family outings and vacations that include physical activity such as hiking, backpacking or swimming.

SHOPPING, PREPARING AND STORING

- Ripe watermelons have a yellow ground spot in the place the melon rested on the soil. If this spot is green or white, the watermelon is probably not ripe.
- Whole melons will keep in the refrigerator for no longer than a week. Once cut, they should be kept refrigerated and covered with plastic wrap.

COOKING TIPS

- The flavor of watermelon can be enhanced by adding a squeeze of lemon juice, honey or chopped mint.
- Sliced watermelon flavors wonderfully with salt, pepper and goat cheese on bread as a sandwich or can be enjoyed atop a salad with citrus vinaigrette.

FLORIDA FRUIT SALAD WITH LIME AND HONEY

serves 4

- 2 limes, juiced
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 dash salt
- 2 mangoes, peeled and diced
- 2 cups watermelon, cubed
- 1 pint blueberries, rinsed
- 1/4 cup fresh mint, hand-torn

1. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, add lime juice, honey and salt.
2. Stir the lime juice mixture to blend flavors.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients, and gently stir to combine.
4. Keep fruit salad refrigerated until serving.

Recipe provided by Chef Justin Timineri, C.E.C., Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Calories: 151; Total Fat: 1 g; Saturated Fat: 0 g; Total Carbohydrates: 39 g; Protein: 2 g; Sodium: 42 mg

CHOOSE MYPLATE!

- Make at least half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) dairy.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Go lean with protein.

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