



Cantaloupe Agua Fresca

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time / Cook Time / Serves -

Equipment

- Dry measuring cups
- Liquid measuring cup
- Blender
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife

Ingredients

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- 1 cantaloupe
- 1 C reserved sparkling apple cider
- 1 lime
- 1/8 C honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 C sugar (or 4 to 5 stevia packets)
- 1 C crushed ice
- fresh mint leaves

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Instructions

Cantaloupe Agua Fresca

chop + pour + blend + drink!

Have kids chop then purée **4 cups of cantaloupe** with **1 cup of the reserved apple cider** in your blender until smooth. Add **1/2 cup of sugar** and about **1 cup of crushed ice**. Blend until smooth and icy. Next, cut **1 lime** into quarters, squeeze the lime juice into each glass, and add torn fresh mint leaves. Blend a bit more, then taste and adjust flavors until you love it and serve! "¡Muy bien!" ("Very good!")

Featured Ingredient: Cantaloupe!

Hi! I'm Cantaloupe!

"I'm so happy to be part of your recipe today! I'm a variety of muskmelon with firm and juicy orange flesh. People often eat me with breakfast and in fruit salads and desserts. Because I'm made up of 90 percent water, the great taste of a juicy, sweet cantaloupe comes with a very small caloric price: only 50 calories per 6-ounce slice!"

History & Etymology

Cantaloupe derives its name from the town of Cantalupo, Italy, where cantaloupe seeds arrived from Armenia and were planted in the papal gardens in the 16th century.

Cantaloupe has plenty of relatives! It is a member of a vine-crop family known as Cucurbitaceae, which includes other melons, squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, and gourds. It is thought that they originally grew in the wilds of India and other parts of Asia.

Explorers brought cantaloupe to the New World in seed form and later saw it cultivated by Native Americans.

Of all the melons, cantaloupe is the most popular in the United States!

Colorado Rocky Ford Cantaloupes have been grown in the Arkansas River Valley since 1887.

Anatomy

North American cantaloupes have a light yellow and green net-like rind or peel. When you cut one in half, you will see that its firm, moderately sweet flesh is orange with seeds in the middle.

Cantaloupe sizes range from 4 to 7 inches in diameter, and they weigh between one to eleven pounds.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

It takes cantaloupes 3 to 4 months to grow before they are mature enough to be picked.

When choosing cantaloupe, do not pick one with the stem still attached, which means the fruit is immature.

Look for melons with a yellowish tint to the rind and a strong melon smell. Use your thumb to press on the cantaloupe rind. The cantaloupe should yield to gentle pressure when it is ripe.

To ripen a cantaloupe at home, leave it at room temperature for two to four days. However, if it is already ripe, refrigerate it until ready to eat.

Don't forget to wash your cantaloupe thoroughly before cutting it! The surface of the rind could have harmful bacteria, like salmonella.

After cutting a cantaloupe, wrap it in plastic wrap and keep it in the refrigerator for up to three days until you're ready to eat it.

Cantaloupe seeds can be roasted and eaten like pumpkin seeds.

You can eat cantaloupe by itself for a snack or with breakfast, or slice, cube, or blend it and add to salads, soups, sauces, desserts, sorbet, granitas, or drinks.

Nutrition

Cantaloupe is an excellent source of vitamins A and C and beta-carotene. These nutrients are antioxidants, and when they are present in the food we eat, they help protect cells and fight disease.

Cantaloupe also contributes to fiber intake, and fiber aids digestion and helps lower bad cholesterol levels.