



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee ~ August 2015

Wonderful Watermelon

If a sprinkle of salt is the wildest you have ever gotten with watermelon, get ready to enjoy the juicy summer staple like never before. As sweet as it is, you get more dimensions out of watermelon by pairing it with opposite flavors such as salty cheeses, tangy vinegars, spicy jalapeños and bright fresh herbs. Bring out the sweetness by grilling.

Grilled Watermelon with Blue Cheese and Prosciutto

Three ½-inch thick watermelon rounds, quartered	Freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil	4 ounces blue cheese, crumbled
1 cup sweet onion, peeled, quartered and thinly sliced	Fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, coarsely chopped	2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Kosher salt	

Preheat grill to medium-high heat, 350 to 400°F. Place watermelon quarters on a baking pan and place in freezer for 15 minutes, until very cold but not frozen.

When grill is hot, brush both sides of watermelon lightly with olive oil. Place on hot grill for 30 seconds to 1 minute until grill marks appear. Turn watermelon over and grill for another 30 seconds. Transfer to a serving plate; sprinkle with salt and ground pepper. Top with sliced onions, prosciutto and blue cheese. Sprinkle with basil leaves and drizzle with balsamic vinegar. Serve immediately.

Watermelon Gazpacho

8 cups seedless watermelon, small diced	¼ cup flat-leafed parsley, chopped
1 Kirby cucumber, small diced	3 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
1 cup red bell pepper, finely diced	¼ cup shallot, minced
1 tablespoon jalapeño, minced	2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup fresh basil, chopped	Juice of 1 large lime

Mix watermelon, cucumber, bell pepper, jalapeño, basil, parsley, vinegar, shallot, oil and salt in a large bowl. Purée 3 cups of the mixture in a blender to desired smoothness; transfer to second large bowl. Puree another 3 cups of mixture in a blender and add to second bowl. Stir remaining diced mixture into second bowl. Chill until very cold. *Makes 8 servings*

Watermelon Cooler

8 cups of ½-inch cubed chilled watermelon	One 12 ounce can frozen limeade concentrate
1 cup water	3 cups chilled ginger ale, divided

Blend watermelon cubes, water and limeade concentrate in a blender. Divide into two pitchers and add 1½ cups ginger ale to each pitcher; serve immediately. *Makes 10 to 12 servings*

Watermelon Bars

11 ounce box of vanilla wafers
¼ cup sugar
4 tablespoons butter, melted
2 tablespoons water
5 cups of watermelon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest

¼ cup fresh lemon juice
½ cup sugar
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
½ cup half and half cream
1 ounce unflavored gelatin,

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9 x 13-inch pan with cooking spray. In food processor, pulse vanilla wafers until finely ground. Add sugar; pulse 2 to 3 times to blend. Add melted butter and water; pulse 2 to 3 times more to blend. Press crumbs into the 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 20 minutes; cool.

Set aside 2 cups of the watermelon juice. In a blender, add lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar, cream cheese and cream. Blend until creamy. Slowly add 3 cups of the watermelon juice and blend until smooth.

Sprinkle the gelatin over the remaining 2 cups of watermelon juice. Allow to sit for 2 minutes. Gently heat the watermelon gelatin mixture over low heat to completely dissolve gelatin. Cool slightly. Add the watermelon with the gelatin to the large bowl of watermelon mixture. Stir to combine. Gently pour mixture over cooled crust. Place in freezer for 2 hours or until mixture is firm. *Serves 18*

Beef And Watermelon Stir-Fry

1 pound sirloin tip strips, cut into thin strips
4 large garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon cold water
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons dry white wine, divided
2 tablespoons hot water
2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 tablespoons canola oil, divided
1 medium-sized sweet onion, peeled, quartered and sliced
12 ounces fresh sugar snap peas
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
16 ounces (2 cups) seedless watermelon, rind removed and cut into sticks
2 cups hot cooked rice

Toss together beef, garlic, cornstarch, water, soy sauce, sesame oil and 1 tablespoon wine. Let marinate for 30 minutes. Stir hot water, hoisin sauce and remaining wine together.

Remove beef from marinade, discard marinade. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; cook half of beef in 1 tablespoon canola oil in a large skillet over high heat, without stirring for 1 minute or until browned. Turn beef and cook for 30 seconds more or until browned. Transfer to warm plate. Repeat adding 1 tablespoon canola oil and beef.

In same skillet heat 1 tablespoon canola over medium-high, stir fry onions for 2 minutes. Add snap peas, ginger and crushed red pepper for 1 minute. Add beef and hoisin mixture; stir-fry for 1 minute or until sauce slightly thickens. Remove from heat and add watermelon. Serve immediately with hot cooked rice. *Serves 4*

