



California Melon Guide

Sweet Summer Melons

Ambrosia: A hybrid muskmelon with juicy, tender, pale orange flesh and sweet flavor with floral nuances.

Athena, a muskmelon, has pale orange firm flesh that releases a sweet, floral, and fruity scent when ripe.

Canary: Have bright yellow skin and a crisp, super-sweet creamy colored flesh.

Cantaloupe and Honeydews are members of the same species, *Cucumis melo*, but they are two very different fruits. Honeydew has a smooth light-colored rind with firm green flesh while Cantaloupe has a darker netted rind and softer orange flesh. They are both sweet and juicy and can be interchanged in recipes.

Charenteis: A petite-sized melon with a smooth, hard, pistachio-grey colored skin and distinct green ribbing. Its flesh is deep orange, dense, smooth and sweet similar to that of a cantaloupe. When ripe it is highly fragrant with tropical fruit and floral notes. It has a delicate and short shelf-life.

Galias have a golden, netted rind and juicy green flesh with a tropical flavor and intense fragrance.

Goddess: Looks like a Cantaloupe but the netting is not as raised and the flesh is softer. It has a fruity flavor and are delicious in smoothies.

Golden Giant is an elongated, crisp and refreshing Korean style melon.

Hamis are oblong in shape with juicy orange flesh. They taste similar to a Cantaloupe with a more intense flavor and firmer texture.

Haogen: Unique soft green-fleshed melon that is dripping with sugar and a refreshing, honeyed flavor.

Honeyloupe: A cross between a honeydew and cantaloupe, Honeyloupe are crisp, flavorful, and sweet. The skin on these melons is smooth and pale.

Orange Crush Cantaloupes have a golden netted rind with deep orange flesh and high sugar content.

Piel De Sapo: Have pale green to white inner flesh with a sweet flavor similar to Honeydew. Sometimes called the Christmas Melon because they store well.

Sharyln: Have a cracked skin with tan and yellow-orange coloring. Their pale orange flesh is soft near the center and more firm near the rind. Its aromatics are both floral and fruity. Its flavor and aroma often improve after harvest, though the sugar content remains the same. Sharlyn Melons have a short shelf-life and should be eaten within a week of harvesting when ripe.

Snow Leopard Honeydews have white skin with splashes of dark green and light colored sweet green flesh.

Tuscan Cantaloupe Melons have a sensuous flavor. As the dark green stripes fade the melon develops a full flavor and aroma.

Watermelons

Neon Moon: Who can resist the name? Dark green rind shines against a vibrant yellow flesh. Mix different colored watermelon for a fruit salad sure to please.

Orange: Light green rind with variegated deep stripes of green. This is not your ordinary watermelon. Slice open to reveal Cantaloupe colored flesh with a mild sweetness.

Sunshine: Add a pop of color to your melon display with this fun yellow rind watermelon. Cut it open and you will be surprised by the bright red flesh.

Orchid: Sweet and juicy orange flesh watermelon.

Sugar Baby: Dark green rind encompasses bright red super sweet flesh. It is also called an ice box or picnic watermelon because of its petite size.



CALIFORNIA MELONS

California Melons are at the peak of flavor!

California melons are at the peak of flavor! California melon season begins around Memorial Day in El Centro at the southern end of the Imperial Valley in the desert. As the weather continues to get warmer, melon production moves north to the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley to Bakersfield and Coalinga. By July melons are coming out of the northern end of the San Joaquin Valley in Firebaugh and Los Banos and by mid-July melons will move up through the San Joaquin Valley into Yolo County near Sacramento.

Picking a ripe melon is very difficult and is not an exact science. Melons ripen on the vine and do not get any sweeter once picked although texture and flavor can improve. Netted varieties such as **Muskmelons, Galia and Charenteis** will "slip" off the vine when ripe. There will be a slight cracking in the area around the stem and the melons will separate from the vine naturally. The skin under the netting will slightly change to yellow. Other melons with hard smooth skin such as the **Honeydew Melon or Casaba** will change color and have a waxy feel when ripe. The best way to tell if they are ripe is to cut one open and taste it.

There are no hard and fast rules but you can use these suggestions as guidelines when shopping. Melons covered in netting such as a **Cantaloupe, Galia, or Haogen** will be very fragrant when ripe. Make sure to smell the stem end before buying. You can check the ripeness of most melons by gently pressing on the blossom end of the melon, the end opposite of the stem. A melon should be ready to eat when it gently yields to pressure. If your finger breaks the skin of the melon it is over ripe and past its time to eat. As mentioned above melons with hard smooth skins are harder to tell when ripe. The **Honeydew Melon** for example will become waxy and almost sticky when ripe. Your best bet is to cut them open and taste them. Watermelons are too thick to do the press test. One way to try and determine the ripeness of a watermelon is to thump on the rind with your knuckles and listen for a dull thumping sound. The juiciest melons will be heavy for their size. Picking watermelons in a field by ripeness is an art and not a science.

Melons that have been well tended to will have a small area called a couche that has been flattened and is discolored from sitting on the ground. If the couche is too prominent or large it means the melons were not turned over or propped up during the growing season.

Read the full story

<https://www.earlsorganic.com/blog/how-to-tell-if-a-melon-is-ripe>

