**melon**

Did you know? Melon leaves accumulate a great deal of calcium which makes them especially useful in worm compost.

**Preparation:** You should wash melons thoroughly with warm soapy water before preparing them because microbes that linger on the surface may cause food poisoning upon introduction to the fruits’ flesh.

**About:** With the exception of watermelon, melons are fruits of *Cucumis melo*, a close relative of the cucumber.

**Varieties:** The most common types of western melons fall into two families: summer melons which are very aromatic with rough rinds like cantaloupes, and winter melons which usually have smooth or wrinkled rinds like casabas and honeydews.

**In the garden:** Melons do well planted with sweet corn or sunflowers as they enjoy the partial shade provided by the foliage.

**Health:** In a mere 56 calories per cup, melons supply a whopping 100% of the vitamin A requirement from beta carotene and over 100% of the vitamin C requirement as well. Both of these nutrients help ward off various age-related diseases such as cancer, and may also help boost skin health.

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**corn**

**History:** More commonly known as maize, corn was domesticated in Mexico around 10,000 years ago from a large grass called teosinte.

**Types:** There are five main types of corn: popcorn and flint corn have large amounts of storage protein, dent corn is the most commonly grown for animal feed, flour corns are soft and easily ground, and sweet corn is the type eaten as a vegetable in the United States.

**Preparation:** Early corn eaters developed a special pretreatment to ease the removal of the tough kernel hull by cooking it in water made alkaline with substances like ash or lime. This process softens the hull enough for it to be rubbed off, helps form the kernels into a dough for making tortillas, and releases the niacin bound inside.

**Health:** This must-have vegetable at summertime meals is loaded with nutrients—notably folate, a B vitamin that is crucial for a healthy pregnancy as well as for protecting your heart and circulatory system. Corn also supplies beta-carotene, an orange-red carotenoid that may protect against lung and other types of cancer.

**Eymology:** In the U.S. we use the term corn to refer specifically to this vegetable; however, originally it was the English term for any type of grain, even grains of salt. For example, corned beef has nothing to do with corn, but refers to the grains of salt used to preserve this type of beef. Other cultures refer to this vegetable as *maize* which is derived from the Latin *zea*.