



Watermelon

To me, nothing says summer more than a delicious juicy, ripe watermelon. I enjoy it best, served ice cold with a sprinkling of salt.

*Watermelon is 92% water making it a hydrating fruit.

*It belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family that also includes cucumbers and pumpkin.

*There are over 1,200 varieties of watermelon worldwide.

*The largest watermelon on record weighed 350.5 pounds.

*Watermelon is a fruit, but is also classified as a vegetable due to its family.

*Some seeds of the watermelon are edible and packed with nutrients.

*Watermelon is rich vitamins A, C and B6, as well as antioxidants.

*The rind of the water-

melon can be pickled.

*Watermelon was first cultivated in Africa over 4,000 years ago.

*The name "watermelon" comes from its high water content and sweet taste.

Grab one of these delicious summer fruits and give some of the recipes a try. Thanks for reading.

WATERMELON and FETA SALAD

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small jalapeno, seeded and chopped
- 8 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshy ground pepper
- ¼ cup finely torn or chopped fresh mint

3 cups large diced red seedless watermelon

½ cup diced English cucumber

¼ cup finely sliced green onion

½ cup Greek Feta cheese, crumbled

In a glass jar with a lid, add the garlic, jalapeno, oil, red wine vinegar; shake vigorously. Add the mint and salt and pepper; set aside. When ready to serve, combine the watermelon, cucumber and green onions in a large bowl. Dress the combination with vinaigrette and gently toss. Sprinkle the top with the crumbled Feta cheese. Serve chilled.

WATERMELON SALSA

- 2 cups finely chopped watermelon
- ½ cup finely chopped peeled cucumber
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- ¼ cup finely chopped sweet red pepper
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
- ¼ cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh basil
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh mint
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 1 tsp. lime juice

In a large bowl, combine the watermelon, cucumber, onion, peppers and herbs. Drizzle with honey and lime juice; gently toss to coat. Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving with tortilla scoops.

WATERMELON SORBET

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 8 cups cubes, seedless watermelon
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- Fresh mint leaves, optional

In a small sauce pan, bring sugar and water to a boil; cook and stir until sugar dissolves and set aside. In a blender or food processor, puree the watermelon in batches until pureed. Pour into a large bowl; add sugar mixture and lemon juice. Pour mixture into a 13 x 9-inch dish and cover and freeze for at least 8 hours or until firm. Serve with a garnish of mint leaves.

**Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, The Help. Fleming can be reached at lafkitchen@hughes.net.*

Have a (Safe) Blast this July 4

Jackson, Miss. – As you plan to celebrate a long July 4 weekend, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) wants you to do it safely. Protect your loved ones from potential dangers from fireworks, impaired driving, water accidents, food poisoning and extreme heat by staying alert and taking precautions to ensure everyone's safety.

Fireworks Safety
There were 11 reported fireworks-related deaths in the United States in 2024, with nearly 15,000 injuries, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Emergency rooms treated 1,700 injuries involving sparklers.

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit—hot enough to melt some metals.

- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy, in case of fire or other mishap.

- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area, and only ignite fireworks labeled for consumer use.

- Never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

- Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.

- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully.

- Follow all instructions and warnings. Never hold them in hand unless specified in instructions.

Roadway Safety
The July 4 holiday is one of the busiest travel periods of the year, often accompanied by an increase in serious and fatal crashes. Many of these tragedies are preventable. Stay safe on the road:

- Always wear your seat-

belt, and ensure all passengers are properly restrained.

- Never drive while impaired by alcohol, drugs or medications that affect your ability to drive safely and avoid distractions including texting, using social media or handling mobile devices.

- Designate a sober driver before attending celebrations where alcohol will be consumed.

- Watch for increased pedestrian, bicycle and motorcycle traffic during holiday events.

Water Safety
Drownings also usually spike during July, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are the No. 1 cause of death in children 1-4 years old. Historically, the July 4 weekend is particularly deadly due to a combination of large crowds, heavy boating traffic and alcohol consumption.

- Never swim alone.
- Constantly watch children.

- Learn CPR and learn how to swim.

- Avoid drinking alcohol while in or near water.

- Install a fence around pools.

- Remove toys from pools.

Boating Safety
Mississippians spend much of the holiday weekend enjoying lakes, rivers and other waterways. Taking a few precautions can help prevent tragedy.

- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket when on the water.

- Ensure children wear life jackets whenever they are near or on open water.

- Designate a sober boat operator and avoid alcohol while boating.

- Check weather conditions before heading out; monitor changing conditions throughout the day.

- Keep a close eye on swimmers and avoid boating in designated swimming areas.

Food Safety

From undercooked meats to a forgotten potato salad, foodborne illnesses can wreak havoc on your digestive system, even causing death. As you fire up the grill, remember these food safety tips:

- Keep foods chilled when outside to reduce foodborne illnesses. Don't let foods sit out for more than two hours (one hour if the temperature is higher than 90 degrees).

- Plates, tongs or trays that hold raw meats should be cleaned well before they touch other foods.

- Always marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.

- Cook food to a safe internal temperature. Use a food thermometer to be sure.

- Keep grilled food hot until serving by moving it to the side of the grill rack.

Heat Safety

Mississippi's summer heat and humidity can quickly lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke, especially during outdoor celebrations. Protect yourself from heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day, even if you do not feel thirsty.

- Take frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.

- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing and use sunscreen.

- Check on older adults, young children, and individuals with chronic medical conditions.

- Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked vehicle, even for a short time.

Have a blast this holiday weekend, Mississippi, but please, not at the expense of your family's safety. Whether you're traveling, boating, grilling, swimming, or enjoying fireworks, a little planning can go a long way toward ensuring everyone returns home safely.

Stay up to date on news on the MSDH Healthy Mobile App, on our website www.msdh.ms.gov, and on social media: facebook.com/healthymys, twitter.com/msdh and Instagram.com/healthy.ms

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Office of Motor Vehicle and County Service Legislation Updates

To the Taxpayers:
Starting July 1st, 2026, Legislative Tag Credit will be 7.5%. Legislative tag credit is a credit the State of Mississippi gives to help out on your Ad Valorem tax registration tag fees, which are your values. It has decreased, which has caused your tag to increase. Please feel free to call the Holmes County Tax Assessor/Collector's Office for more information.

REMINDER:

The last day to pay taxes will be August 28th, 2026. The Holmes County tax office will have the land sale on August 30th. Please call the Holmes County tax office for more information about the land sale. Unpaid taxes will be listed in the *Holmes County Herald* the 1st and 2nd weeks in August. The land sale is conducted by GOV Ease. Please call the tax office with your questions.