

Wringing more out of watermelon

By Grace Dickinson
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — As children, many of us were warned in jest that swallowing watermelon seeds would make melons grow in our bellies.

In truth, those pesky seeds can be beneficial to your health. So, too, is the rind, so think twice before tossing them out.

“Watermelon’s health benefits extend well beyond its juicy flesh,” says Theresa Shank, a registered dietitian and owner of Philly Dietitian. “The seeds offer almost the same nutrient density of other more common seeds, like pumpkin and sunflower, and the rind is among the richest edible sources of L-citrulline, an amino acid that has been studied extensively in its relation to heart health.”

A good source of healthy fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals such as iron, folate, and magnesium, the seeds actually prove to be as smart of a snack as the fruit itself. Toss them in the oven for a quick bake, and it becomes easy to flip what’s traditionally perceived as a nuisance into an absolute delight.

Add the roasted seeds to your next salad, yogurt bowl, or even slice of toast for an element of crunch and hint of nutty flavor.

“They’re relatively low in calories, too — about 160 calories per one-ounce portion, or essentially a palmful,” says Shank, who recommends munching on them straight out of the oven, too.

As for the rind, it serves well as a crunchy component, too, whether tossed into a stir-fry or pickled and plated alongside a sandwich or smoky barbecue. A pickled rind creates a great salad topper.

To use in a stir-fry, remove the rind’s outer layer of green skin with a knife, reserving the white part to julienne into matchsticks. Sautéed over high heat, the rind will soften in as little as five minutes, absorbing the flavors of what it’s placed within. Watermelon rind is most commonly incorporated into Asian-inspired dishes, sautéed alongside ingredients such as sesame oil, soy sauce,



Grace Dickinson/Philadelphia Inquirer-TNS

Like the juicy flesh, the seeds and rind of a watermelon can both be transformed into delicious and healthful snacks.

ginger, and garlic. Add in such veggies as carrots and peppers, and a protein such as shrimp, tofu, or chicken, to craft a quick and effortless meal.

For an easy quick-pickle rind, check out the recipe that follows. Courtesy of Brine Street Picklery, a Philly-born and -brined picklery, the recipe calls for a mixture of vinegar, sugar, and spices that’s used to soak and soften the rind. What results is a slightly tangy and sweet pickle that resembles the flavor of a classic bread-and-butter-style pickle, with small hints of clove and ginger.

With only a few weeks remaining until the official start to fall, get out there and embrace summer, from rind to seed, before it’s too late.

BRINE STREET PICKLED WATERMELON RIND

Yields 2 quarts of pickled white rind

- 1 watermelon, smaller, circular size
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 cups water
- 1½ cup white vinegar
- 1½ cup rice vinegar
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 cup fresh watermelon juice (from pink inner flesh)
- 1 cinnamon stick,

- broken in half
- 8 whole cloves
- 1 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, thinly sliced

Cut watermelon into four sections. Use a peeler or a paring knife to carefully remove the green skin. Then, remove the pink flesh, setting about three cups of the fruit aside to make the watermelon juice. (Save the rest to snack on later!)

Using a small paring knife, cut the white rind into 1-inch-by-1-inch squares. Put the squares of white rind into a mixing bowl, and add salt. Mix; set aside for 30 minutes.

Take the three cups of reserved pink flesh, and puree in food processor or blender until completely liquefied. Strain 2 to 3 times to remove as much pulp as possible.

In a stainless steel pot, add water, vinegars, sugar, watermelon juice, cloves, cinnamon stick, and ginger. Bring to gentle boil and cook for 8-10 minutes, using a spoon to remove any pulp that rises to the surface.

Divide the white rind squares between mason jars or plastic half-quart containers. Pour hot brine over the rinds. Place lids on the containers/jars and refrigerate for 2-3 hours. Store in the refrigerator and use within one week.

— Brine Street Picklery

ROASTED WATERMELON SEEDS

Yields about ¼ cup, depending on the size of the watermelon used to collect the seeds

- Watermelon seeds (black seeds only)
- Coconut oil
- Salt

Fill a medium-size bowl with water, and add salt until water is heavily salted. Place seeds in the bowl, and let sit for 1 to 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Drain the seeds and place on a towel to pat dry; use the towel to remove any goo around the seeds, if possible.

If coconut oil is firm, place a tablespoon or two in the microwave for 10-30 seconds, until melted. Toss the seeds with coconut oil, adding a little bit at a time until the seeds are lightly coated. The more seeds you get from your watermelon, the more coconut oil you will need.

Scatter seeds in a single layer onto the baking sheet. Roast seeds for 25-35 minutes, until crisp, stirring after 15 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel and allow the seeds to cool completely before eating. To store, place seeds in a sealed container in the refrigerator.

2 ingredients = 1 great batch of English muffins

By Leah Eskin
Chicago Tribune

Two-ingredient dough struck me as suspect. How could a single recipe that calls for a pair of staples have conquered the entire internet? Isn’t it just yogurt mashed into flour? How good could it be?

Let me testify: very good.

Presumably science can explain how Greek yogurt and self-rising flour yield bread with a chewy crust and tender interior. Presumably science can be sidestepped in favor of the obvious: It’s a miracle.

One with semantic issues. Self-rising flour comprises all-purpose flour, salt and baking powder. Dough leavening with such a chemical agent produces quick bread, muffin or scone. In other words, two-ingredient bread is a four-ingredient biscuit. And a wonder.

True believers swear the dough can be shaped into pleasing pizza, pretzels and — stretching credulity — bagels. I find its tangy taste and craggy crumb perfect for English muffins — ones simple enough to bake before breakfast. See? Miraculous.

ENGLISH MUFFINS

Prep: 5 minutes

Bake: 22 minutes

Makes: 8

You can substitute 2 cups self-rising flour for the flour, baking powder and salt. I prefer this method.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups plain fat-free Greek yogurt

1. Mash: In a large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. Scrape in yogurt. Using a soft spatula, mash until dough comes together, about 30 seconds.
2. Knead: Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead smooth, a few seconds.
3. Shape: Divide dough into 8 equal pieces. With lightly floured hands, roll each into a ball. Pat each into a puck about 3½ inches in diameter and ½-inch thick.
4. Bake: Set pucks on a parchment-lined baking sheet, leaving a little room in between. Bake at 400 degrees, 10 minutes. Flip each muffin over, and bake until golden brown and hollow-sounding when thumped, another 10 to 12 minutes.
5. Munch: Let cool a bit. Using the tines of a fork, split a muffin. Prize open; slather each craggy face with butter and jam. Enjoy.
6. Store: Slip cooled leftover muffins into a plastic bag, seal and store in the fridge. Reheat at 350 degrees for 5 minutes, or toast lightly.

Aretha Franklin’s peach cobbler

By Susan Selasky
Detroit Free Press

Aretha Franklin was known to enjoy cooking, and when she passed, her peach cobbler recipe became a popular Google search item.

We checked out the recipe and discovered it was featured on an episode of the Food Network’s “Emeril Live.” The Queen of Soul even joined show host Emeril Lagasse as he prepared the cobbler. The day the show was taped also happened to be her birthday, and at the end of the segment, Lagasse and the audience wished her a happy day.

Here’s the recipe. It uses canned peaches, lots of butter and sugar.

ARETHA FRANKLIN’S PEACH COBBLER

Serves: 8 / Prep time: 20 minutes / Total time: 1 hour 15 minutes



Susan Selasky/Detroit Free Press-TNS

Aretha Franklin’s peach cobbler.

- 10 (8½-ounce) cans (or equivalent) sliced peaches, well drained
- 1½ to 2 sticks unsalted butter, divided, 1 stick cut into small pieces
- 1 cup sugar, plus ¼ cup
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- ½ cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 package (two crusts) store-bought refrigerated pie dough

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- Canola oil spray
- 1 pint vanilla ice cream, for serving

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large saucepan, add peaches, 1 stick of butter, 1 cup of sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg and bring to a simmer. Add bread crumbs and

stir. Cook about 5 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and cool.

Using a sprinkle of flour, roll out both pie crusts; one will be used for the top of the cobbler and one for the bottom.

Spray a 10-inch square pan with canola oil and place 1 layer of dough into the baking dish. Scatter a few pieces of butter as well as a dusting of the remaining sugar, on the bottom crust. Pour the peach mixture into the baking dish. Cut the top layer of dough into strips and arrange them on the top of the peaches in a lattice pattern. Top with three or four more pieces of butter. Place a piece of foil in the bottom of the oven to catch any drips. Bake the cobbler for 25 to 30 minutes or until the crust is brown and the peaches are bubbling. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

— From www.foodnetwork.com. Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen.

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