

Cantaloupe Nutrition: Benefits, Risks, Recipes and More

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One reason cantaloupe is good for you is because it's full of beta-carotene, the nutrient that gives it its bright orange color.

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A sweet and juicy slice of cantaloupe may just seem like a delicious summer treat, but there's more to this melon than its flavor.

Cantaloupe is an excellent source of vitamins A and C and contains several other essential nutrients our bodies need to thrive.

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Cantaloupe vs. Honeydew

Both cantaloupe and honeydew are types of melons. Cantaloupe has soft, orange flesh and a rough, beige rind while honeydew has firmer, green flesh and a soft, yellow-green rind. Both fruits are sweet and nutritious, but cantaloupe has significantly more vitamin A and vitamin C than honeydew.

Cantaloupe Nutrition Facts

One cup of cubed cantaloupe is equal to a single serving. One cup of [cubed cantaloupe](#) contains:

Calories: 54

Total fat: 0.3 g

****Saturated** **fat**:** 0.1 g

****Trans** **fat**:** 0 g

Cholesterol: 0 mg

Sodium: 25.6 mg

Total carbs: 13.1 g

Dietary fiber: 1.4 g

Sugar: 12.6 g

Protein: 1.3 g

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Cantaloupe Macros

Total fat: One cup of cantaloupe has 0.3 grams of total fat, which includes 130 milligrams of polyunsaturated fat, 5 milligrams of monounsaturated fat, 0.1 grams of saturated fat and 0 grams of trans fat.

Carbohydrates: One cup of cantaloupe has 13.1 grams of carbs, which includes 1.4 grams of fiber and 12.6 grams of naturally occurring sugars.

Protein: One cup of cantaloupe has 1.3 grams of protein.

Vitamins, Minerals and Other Micronutrients

Vitamin C: 65% Daily Value (DV)

Vitamin A: 30% DV

Potassium: 9% DV

Folate (B9): 8% DV

Copper: 7% DV

Magnesium: 5% DV

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Health Benefits of Cantaloupe

1. It Supports Brain Health

"Cantaloupe is a [rich source of beta-carotene](#), a type of carotenoid that converts in the body to the active form of vitamin A," says [Andrew Akhaphong, RD, LD](#), a registered dietitian for Mackenthun's Fine Foods.

Akhaphong says that eating foods rich in beta-carotene is associated with improved cognitive function as we age.

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In one study, 298 from ages 80 to over 98 had their levels of beta-carotene tested — and higher levels were associated with better cognition, which included memory, processing speed, attention and executive function, per a June 2013 study in the [Journal of Aging Research](#).

2. Cantaloupe Is Heart-Healthy

Cantaloupe is low in sodium and contains 9 percent of your DV of potassium per 1-cup serving. When eaten along with other [high-potassium foods](#), cantaloupe can be a delicious part of a heart-healthy diet.

Eating too little potassium and too much sodium increases your risk of heart disease and stroke, per the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC).

One cup of cantaloupe has 427 milligrams of potassium, or 9 percent of the DV.

3. It Can Help Prevent Constipation

Many of us know how uncomfortable and painful constipation can be. While there are several different [causes of constipation](#), eating cantaloupe could help with the solution.

Cantaloupe is 90 percent water and contains 2.5 grams of fiber per cup. Both water and fiber can help to relieve constipation, according to the [University of California San Francisco](#).

Drinking 2 to 4 extra glasses of water a day and including more fruits and vegetables in your diet is a way to naturally help relieve constipation, per the [Cleveland Clinic](#). Including fruit with high water content like cantaloupe can help you to meet both goals.

4. It Can Help With Iron Absorption

If you follow a plant-based diet, you may be at a higher risk for iron-deficiency anemia.

Non-heme iron from plants is harder for your body to absorb and plants often contain nutrients such as phytates and tannins that can make it even harder to absorb iron from plant food, according to the [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#).

You can increase the amount of iron you absorb from your food as much as six times just by including 50 milligrams of vitamin C with your meal, per an October 2013 review in the [Medical Journal of Australia](#).

One cup of cantaloupe has 65 percent of your DV of vitamin C, so pairing it with plants high in iron can be a great way to prevent and improve iron-deficiency anemia. Try some of these ideas:

Combine cantaloupe in a smoothie with spinach and peanut butter.

Serve cantaloupe with pinto beans on whole-grain toast.

Add cantaloupe to a spinach salad topped with pumpkin seeds, avocado and vinegar and oil dressing.

5. Cantaloupe Benefits the Skin

Cantaloupe is an excellent source of vitamin C, with 1 cup providing 65 percent of your DV — and this nutrient is necessary for healthy skin.

Vitamin C protects against UV-induced damage caused by harmful free radicals, per [Oregon State University](#). What's more, the nutrient also helps build collagen, which is necessary for skin repair and elasticity.

Cantaloupe Health Risks

1. Foodborne Illness

Cantaloupe may have a number of health benefits, but it can harbor deadly bacteria if not handled correctly. The outer rind can become contaminated with listeria or salmonella through irrigation or other ways along the processing chain.

"Listeria may cause chronic diarrhea, fever, muscle aches and chills between 1 and 4 weeks after consumption, with some reports saying even greater than 70 days," Akhaphong warns.

The good thing is that you can avoid foodborne illness by avoiding fruit with punctured skin, washing the entire cantaloupe with soap and water before cutting it and storing it in the fridge.

2. Medication Interactions

Cantaloupe can react with a class of heart medication known as beta-blockers.

"[People who are taking beta-blockers] should consume cantaloupes in moderation as this medicine causes high levels of potassium," Akhaphong says.

High potassium levels can be dangerous for your heart and cause heart palpitations or arrhythmias, chest pain, muscle weakness or nausea and vomiting, per the [Cleveland Clinic](#).

Preparation and Useful Tips

Like any melon, knowing what's on the inside can be tricky. Here are some tips to help you pick a perfectly ripe and delicious cantaloupe:

Check the rind for a beige or yellowish color, any green spots are signs that it's not quite ripe.

The stem end should be smooth and round. There will be a slight give to the stem when gently pushed.

The melon should feel heavy for its size.

Here's how to safely prepare and store cantaloupe, per the [Texas A&M Agrilife Extension](#):

Only select cantaloupe with firm skin. Avoid any that are damaged or soft.

Wash and scrub the outside of the cantaloupe with soapy water.

Store cut cantaloupe in a covered container in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Throw away if any signs of mold, spoilage or if left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Recipes With Cantaloupe

Try it frozen in a delicious [Honeydew Cantaloupe Pop](#)

Add to a salad in a [Cantaloupe and Blackberry Mason Jar Salad](#)

Serve on toast with an [Avocado, Prosciutto and Melon Tartine](#)

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