

ODE TO WATERMELON



Bryant Terry's recipes have plenty of soul—from the modern, meatless takes on traditional soul food to his suggestions for musical and video accompaniment.

*From the book *Vegan Soul Kitchen* by Bryant Terry. Excerpted by arrangement with *Da Capo Lifelong*, a member of the Perseus Books Group. Copyright © 2009.*

HERBED SEA SALT

Soundtrack: “Sprinkle Me” by E-40 and Suga T from In a Major Way

The first time I had herbed salt was when Nigel Walker of Eatwell Farm gave me some of his lavender salt. After that, I started experimenting with other herbs, even combining some to make mixed herb sea salts. My favorite is basil sea salt, which I make to sprinkle on Watermelon Slices with Basil Sea Salt. If your salt starts to cake up, simply give it another whirl in the grinder.

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh herbs of your choice
¼ cup coarse sea salt

In a coffee grinder, combine the herbs and salt. Pulse until mixed well. Store in an airtight glass container.

Makes about ¼ cup.

WATERMELON JUICE AND WATERMELON WATER

Besides drinking the tasty juice of watermelons straight and using it to make drinks, watermelon vinaigrette, watermelon popsicles and sorbet, I add it to water to give it a fruity essence.

To make watermelon juice, add watermelon chunks to an upright blender, purée until liquefied and then strain through a fine-mesh sieve to remove all solids. (Compost the pulp.) Every 3 pounds of watermelon (before the rind is removed) usually yields between 3½ to 4 cups of juice, after straining.

For watermelon water, use 1 part watermelon juice for every 6 parts water.

WATERMELON SLICES WITH BASIL SEA SALT

Soundtrack: “Watermelon Man” by Herbie Hancock, from the album Head Hunters

Film: Watermelon Man (1970), directed by Melvin Van Peebles. This narrative film tells the story of a white insurance salesman who wakes up one morning to find that he has become black.

Although many of my family members would add a dash of salt to fresh watermelon when I was young, I would always pass. Why would you ruin perfectly sweet watermelon with salt?

Now I know that a tad of salt actually adds a pleasant contrast and helps bring out some of the watermelon's sweetness. Basil, which goes perfectly with watermelon, provides a nice accent.

8 slices of ripe yellow or red watermelon (or a mix)
Basil herbed sea salt (see recipe at left)

Sprinkle the watermelon with the basil salt and serve each guest two slices.

Makes 4 servings.



Bryant Terry photo by Sara Remington; Watermelon courtesy of Da Capo Lifelong