

Watermelons feature on one in 10 U.S. menus, study finds

Watermelon on U.S. menus has grown by 27% in the past four years, according to a recent study on trends commissioned by the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) and conducted by Datassential.

Watermelon has progressed from “adoption” to “proliferation” in the usage-menu adoption cycle as independent and chain foodservice operators alike embrace the fruit, the group said.

“The versatility of watermelon is remarkable and underutilized. I love various cooking techniques like grilling or smoking and used in savory applications,” said Chef Dave Woolley, CD Culinary Approach.

“In salads, it has tremendous presence and can even be used in a center of the plate capacity ... it is excellent with grains, cheese and many vegetables and proteins.”

According to the study, watermelon is one of the fastest growing fruits featured on salads with more than 100% 4-year growth.

The NWPB said proteins most commonly paired with watermelon are chicken and pork. In addition to watermelon offerings trends, the research also helps identify opportunities for new, innovative usage.

“One of the advantages to working with the Watermelon Board is that we can assist operators with recipe ideation to optimize consumption based on research-backed consumer preference,” NWPB director of foodservices Megan McKenna said.

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