

# Cantaloupe

The cantaloupe most likely originated in a region from Iran to India and Africa. It was later introduced to Europe and, around 1890, became a commercial crop in the United States.



The North American cantaloupe, common in the United States, Mexico, and in some parts of Canada, is actually a muskmelon, a different variety of *Cucumis melo*, and has a net-like (or reticulated) skin covering. It is a round melon with firm, orange, moderately sweet flesh and

a thin, reticulated, light-brown rind. Cantaloupes are members of the cucurbit family of plants (*Cucurbitaceae*) that also includes cucumbers, pumpkins, squashes, gourds, and a long list of melons. Melons in this same plant family with cantaloupe include Watermelon and honeydew melon, along with crenshaw, casaba, Persian, and canary melon.

Cantaloupe contains a wide variety of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory phytonutrients, including the carotenoids alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, lutein, beta-cryptoxanthin and zeaxanthin; the flavonoid luteolin; the organic acids ferulic and caffeic acid; and two cucurbitacins—cucurbitacin B and cucurbitacin E. Cantaloupe is an excellent source of vitamin A (in the form of carotenoids) and vitamin C. It is also a very good source of potassium and a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin B1, vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6, folate, magnesium, copper, and vitamin K.