



**Celebrate Fourth of July with these patriotic plates at newspress.com:**

- Grilled Hot Dogs with Sweet-Hot Relish
- All-American Cobb Salad
- Grilled Veggies
- Rhubarb Raspberry Pie
- Firecracker Cocktail

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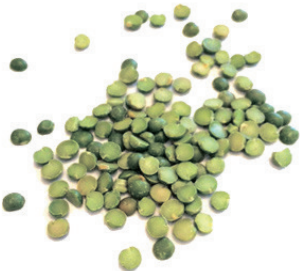
THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2016

## Picks of the WEEK



### Seedless watermelon

They're all fired up for the Fourth: Just in time for the holiday, many local growers are offering red seedless watermelon at the Tuesday and Saturday Santa Barbara, and Sunday Camino Real farmers markets. Consisting of about 92 percent water by weight, watermelon is a refreshing treat to enjoy on a hot summer afternoon. An excellent source of vitamins A and C, along with a host of other essential vitamins and minerals, it is also a good source of protein and dietary fiber. Enjoy straight from the rind or blend into a summery drink or smoothie. For a festive Fourth gathering, consider serving a watermelon salad with fresh herbs, cucumber, red onion and feta, the Fix of the Week on page A7. About \$6 each.



### Split peas

Arroyo Grande grower Fred Ormonde has been waiting the past couple of months to get his pea splitter in order. Finally, this past weekend, his first dried split peas were ready and offered for sale at the Wednesday Solvang and Saturday Santa Barbara markets. For a hearty meal, make a soup by simmering the peas for a couple of hours with diced onion and minced garlic, then season with salt and pepper. You can also add the peas to a slow cooker with a nice ham hock for an added layer of flavor. An excellent source of dietary fiber and protein, split peas are also loaded with essential vitamins and minerals. About \$5 per pound.



### Fingerling potatoes

Pretty much as creamy as potatoes get, these certified organic golden beauties, harvested from Jacob Grants' Roots Organic Farm in Los Olivos, are excellent when roasted, grilled and even mashed. I find them best when roasted in a 400-degree oven for about 30 minutes. Season first with olive oil, salt, pepper and Herbes de Provence, then turn once in the oven. They are also ideal for use in a potato salad. Leave the thin skins on for added nutritional value and texture. Available at the Tuesday Santa Barbara, Wednesday Solvang, Friday Montecito and Saturday Santa Barbara markets. About \$2.50 per pound.

*Sam Edelman is general manager of the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Market Association; photos by Rafael Maldonado/News-Press and Sam Edelman*

# Taking liberties

Recipes and photos by Denisse Salinas  
News-Press correspondent

Declare your independence from basic watermelon slices this Fourth of July with these recipes that star America's favorite fruit



## Grilled Watermelon Caprese Stacks

*Makes 4 servings*

Grilling watermelon completely transforms its flavor, giving it an almost meaty quality. This take on a caprese salad that uses grilled watermelon in place of traditional tomatoes is innovative and unexpected.

- 8 wedge slices watermelon
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup arugula
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- Sea salt, to taste
- 4 thin slices fresh mozzarella (1 ounce each)
- 2 tablespoons balsamic glaze

Heat a grill or nonstick grill pan over medium-high heat. Brush one side of each watermelon slice with vegetable oil. Place oiled side down on hot grill and cook for about 2-3 minutes or until grill marks appear. Transfer to a plate to cool. Toss arugula with olive oil and salt. Set aside. Arrange a watermelon slice on each of 4 plates, then layer with 1 slice cheese and 1/8 cup arugula. Top with another watermelon slice followed by 1/8 cup arugula. Season with salt, drizzle with balsamic glaze and serve.

## Watermelon & Berry Canapes with Goat Cheese Mousse

*Makes 24 appetizers*

These sweet bites feature juicy watermelon and blueberries paired with a light, honey-sweetened goat cheese mousse. The red, white and blue motif makes them a perfectly patriotic appetizer!

- 4 ounces goat cheese, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon heavy cream
- 1 seedless watermelon, cut into 24 (1-inch) rounds
- Blueberries, for garnish
- Fresh mint leaves, for garnish

Combine goat cheese, honey and heavy cream in a medium-sized bowl. Using an electric mixer, whip mixture until light and fluffy. Transfer mixture to a piping bag fitted with a star attachment. Pipe goat cheese mousse onto watermelon rounds and garnish each with 1-2 blueberries and a mint leaf.



## Watermelon Rosé Sangria

*Makes 1 pitcher*

This summery pink beverage is sweetened with simple syrup, a mixture of equal parts sugar and water that is heated until the sugar dissolves. Try steeping cucumber or fresh herbs like basil or mint in the syrup for an added layer of complexity to this drink.

- 4 cups cubed watermelon
- 1 bottle rosé
- 1/2 cup vodka
- 1/2 cup Cointreau or triple sec
- 1/2 cup simple syrup, cooled
- Juice of 2 limes
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Strawberries and blueberries, for garnish
- Additional lime wheels, for garnish
- Ice
- Soda water

Puree watermelon in a blender or food processor and pass through a mesh strainer, discarding solids. Add watermelon juice to a pitcher along with rosé, vodka, Cointreau, simple syrup, lime juice and lemon juice. Stir to combine. Add strawberries, blueberries and lime wheels to pitcher. To serve, pour sangria in glasses filled with ice and top with soda water.



*Denisse Salinas is owner of Le Petit Chef, which offers personal chef and boutique catering services in Santa Barbara. For more information, go to LePetitChefSantaBarbara.com. Visit her blog at LePetitEats.com.*