

## Food News

## Nutrition

## Eating for winter health

• Mother Nature provides us with seasonal vegetables and fruit to help us fight off the winter coughs and sniffles.

Even in these balmy climes we tend to change our wardrobe in the colder months, but too often we fail to change our diets. We need to look at a host of seasonal vegetables and fruit which specifically help us to prevent the typical cold weather illnesses.

Pressed carrots, onions and turnip have a higher level of friendly bacteria to help prevent gastroenteritis. To press them cut them into small and equal pieces or grate them, sprinkle with a little rice or apple vinegar and sea salt and squeeze them with your hands for a few minutes, before putting between two boards with a weight on top for a few hours. The mix of the vinegar and the pressing kick-start the bacteria which begin to multiply and ferment.

Pumpkin is high in Vitamin A, a nutrient which is important in strengthening the body's defence system and in the prevention of infections; it also helps the mucous membranes. This is why eating pumpkin either in soups or roasted is good for calming sore throats or mouths as well as soothing gastritis. If you suffer from stomach acid, dyspepsia or are prone to stomach ulcers a daily dose of pumpkin

could help alleviate the condition.

As kids the onset on winter was not just Bonfire Night and Father Christmas, but tangerines and pomegranates – being the contrary little beggars that most children are, we probably wouldn't have eaten them with such gusto, had we known how good for us they are. Pomegranates are full of antioxidants to reinforce your defence system, more so if you drink the juice. Try the berries in salads, made into a vinaigrette over oysters or smoked trout, a sauce for roast pork or simply drenched with orange juice as a quick and easy snack or sweet.

Tangerines and oranges are obligatory in winter for their high content in Vitamin C, which helps to prevent colds or reduce the potency or duration of their symptoms, as well as for their juicy addition to the diet. Other home remedies include a spoonful of honey for a sore throat, borage tea to help expectoration, Echinacea to boost the body's defences and the bee product, propolis, to help the defences in particular against colds and sore throats.

Finally, whilst watching your diet and eating for health is very important, your doctor should always have the first and last word in any drastic changes in your lifestyle or in looking after your and your family's health.



# Mellow melon

Melon shouldn't be left out of any balanced diet



Recipe and photos courtesy of Montesano

**H**igh in water content and surprisingly low in calories, melon is a staple that shouldn't be left out of any balanced diet.

A common sight in the Spanish peninsula is the local melon grower trundling his barrow through the main square selling his wares as he goes.

Forget about farmer's markets, they take their market with them and often their choice of variety is the delicious tasting, although unfortunately named 'piel de sapo' (toad skin). There in peak season a housewife would expect to pay around a euro each for a melon, here unfortunately most are imported and therefore more expensive.

Our unusual recipe was provided this edition by the local meat-processing company Montesano and is a refreshing and tasty entrée to any meal.

### CHILLED CREAM OF MELON SOUP WITH IBERIAN HAM

#### Ingredients

- 2 kilo ripe melon
- 500g leeks
- 2 small young onions (cebolletas)

- 4 potatoes
- 12 slices of Iberian cured ham
- 2 cheese spread portions
- 75ml meat stock
- 50ml single cream
- fresh mint
- salt
- olive oil

#### Preparation

1. Peel the melon, cut some melon balls for garnish and chop the remaining flesh into small chunks. Finely chop the leek, young onions and potatoes. Fry gently with a small amount of olive oil.

2. When the vegetables are beginning to soften (about four minutes) add the meat stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes.

3. Remove several spoonfuls of stock from the soup, add the cheese portions and blend to a cream. Sieve and season.

4. Mash or blend the rest of the soup and pass through a sieve. Add the luke warm creamy cheese mixture and once blended fully add the single cream. Chill.

5. Serve in soup dishes or spectacularly in gimlet glasses with a garnish of melon balls, a sprig of mint and a curl of delicious Montesano Iberian cured ham.



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