



IFSEA NEWS

Fresh and Bold!

"We enhance the careers of our members through professional and personal growth"



Life on the Weil Side!

Richard F. Weil, MCFE, MCFP Chairman of the Board

Guests Don't Trade Down This Time

Greetings and happy August! Summer is moving right along and as the so called "dog days of summer" continue, it reminds me of all the things that we have been through as a society these past three plus years. Time seems to be quickly fading some of the memories of the pandemic, but the continued remanence of consumer behavior remains. I have recently published a blog article in my company about consumer spending patterns and how customers are reducing their visits, but not their standards and have excerpts of this blog noted below. Happy reading!

Despite economic enthusiasm post-COVID and the quest for return to "normal", many consumers are in periods of financial uncertainty or instability, thanks to inflation, rising grocery and gas costs, and unpredictable markets.

[Alix Partners](#), a global business consulting firm, made moves to study consumer behavior considering the financial unsteadiness, and findings were surprising. "Molly Harnischfeger, a director in New York-based financial advisory and consulting firm's restaurant, hospitality and leisure practice and an author of the report, 'When the Wallet Tightens on the More Experiential Customer,'" consumers are handling their financial uncertainty differently than in recessions past. Even as recent as the recession of 2007-09, spenders might opt for lesser-valued items and experiences to manage financial discomfort. These days, consumers aren't willing to lower their standards, so they'll limit their visits.

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August 2023

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Replace "sorry" with "thank you".

Instead of "sorry I'm late"

Try "thank you for waiting for me".



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Richard F. Weil, MCFE, MCFP Chairman of the Board

(Continued from page 1)

Guests Don't Trade Down This Time

[As reported to Nation's Restaurant News \(NRN\)](#), “We did a compare/contrast of tactics consumers plan to use to reduce restaurant spending,” Harnischfeger noted. “In 2009, trading down to less expensive restaurants far surpassed reducing visits/frequency to restaurants to manage spending. Today, we have the exact opposite spending, where reducing visits significantly exceeds trading down.”

This new behavior affects several different spending categories, firstly, retail, but followed closely by restaurant spending. “As opposed the recession of a dozen years ago, which provided fertile ground for the development of the fast-casual segment, the consumer now is ‘fundamentally different,’ Harnischfeger said. ‘This is a consumer that's more experientially focused...’”

A lot of this has to do with post-COVID sentiment toward life's luxuries. Consumers grew accustomed to life without restaurants, and so rather than increase opportunities to go out, they'd rather make their visits to restaurants feel more ‘high value’. This is a sharp contrast from a consumer base that, less fifteen years ago, was primed for the fast-casual movement.

Pandemic restrictions also heavily impacted generational groups that are more prone to experiences above product. From the get-go, Millennials and Gen Z spenders have shopped and dined-out based on more than convenience, citing food quality, presentation, and aesthetics, setting, community-impact, and values as top-ranking reasons for choice-of-spending. These generations have been conditioned to a certain standard-of-living and would rather go without than sacrifice the caliber of any given spending experience.

For restaurants in the fast-casual category, this is most impacting delivery. While during the start of the pandemic, consumers were invested in new technologies, offerings, and economy boosts, as restrictions wore on, these groups became more interested in cooking at home. These spending groups are utilizing fast-casual restaurants for on-the-go meals (dining in and pick-up), but delivery has plummeted.

Coupled with other economic factors, this shift in recession-like behaviors is greatly affecting the restaurant industry. “Restaurant operators were also facing other economic pressures, with 49% of independent restaurants unable to pay the rent in April – a 15% jump from the month prior, according to data from [Alignable](#) as well as an updated article published June 28, 2023 from [Alignable](#) as well that May rents across the country in the restaurant space are still at about 50% unable to pay their rent...And a Bank of America Survey of small to medium sized business owners found 72% said they were concerned about a potential recession,” states the NRN blog post.

To combat these changes and economic decline, Alix Partners suggests “investing in digital infrastructure to help grow sales, engineer menus to improve margins and reduce complexity, reduce the costs of new buildings and remodels, improve the supply chain to return margins to operations and offer *‘execution excellence’*. It's not just about cash flow, it is about how operators can look at their business through the eyes of their customers. With guests making dining decisions as to where to spend their precious disposable dollars, and to motivate the guest to return to their favorite restaurants, operators must challenge themselves and their staffs to make each guest visit memorable.

In closing this month's newsletter article, I wish all of our friends and colleagues at IFSEA the very best for continued success, and good health!

ESTABLISHED
1968
PREMIUM QUALITY

R.L. SCHREIBER MENU OF CHOICES

R.L. Schreiber puts exceptional Flavor and Service at the heart of all we do.
We collaborate with Healthcare customers for culinary excellence
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Bring a world of delicious flavor to your menu with **R.L. Schreiber**! From global-inspired cuisine to classics, soups, or anything in between, we have your bases covered with over 1,000 premium innovative products. Every batch we manufacture is guaranteed with maximum flavor, freshness, quality, consistency, and safety. Need to hold the salt? Feel free to try **R.L. Schreiber salt-free** herbs, spices, and other seasonings to satisfy appetites!



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R.L. Schreiber has the same passion for food excellence as Chefs preparing the meals and Dietitians planning them. We nurture these relationships with efficient, personal service. We provide flexible solutions to inspire culinary excellence while meeting dietary and budget needs.



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LEBANON, KENTUCKY



BLENDED IN THE U.S.A.



LOOKING AHEAD WITH MANLEY

Ed Manley, MCFBD, MCFE, CHP President Emeritus



ED SAYS GET OUT - SEE AND BE SEEN

I like to tell my nursing home students, “you don’t know what you don’t know!” Half of them fail the CFM test which is MANDATED by Medicare to keep their jobs. And they respond, “I’ve been doing this for many years, I know what I’m doing.” Well, I see their test answers. They are correct, they know what THEY are doing, which doesn’t mean ‘what they are doing is always correct’.

Raymond James Wealth Mgmt. Conference – my daughter invited me as her +1 – Had zero to do with me except having fun.

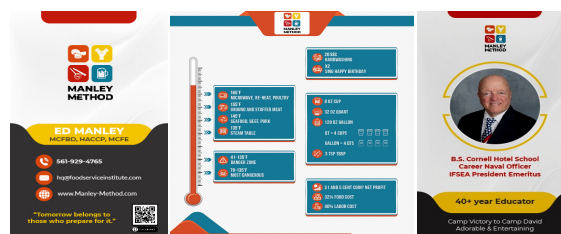
1. CEO’s speech mentioned their homeless initiative, so I met the people that run that and their veterans’ initiative and I’m going to work with them to get homeless vets I can teach.
2. Sat at a table with a couple – saw their nametags which had the city where I’m staying to teach the Army 7th Special Ops Command (Green Beret) in Florida. Turns out he was stationed there and still a big player and going to help me obtain students there and worldwide special ops bases.

While on Navy active duty I joined IFSEA and got active. Retired from Navy, got a job at a messed-up hospital in South Florida, where I knew no one except the President of the local IFSEA Branch I’d met at IFSEA Conferences. “Hey Steve, I need a Chef.” Steve – “I’ll come work with you.” Me - “Well you be my Assistant; I still need a Chef!” Steve – “George (Branch VP) will come work with us!” So now I’ve got 2 wonderful chefs and all their friends (baker to pot washer), all of whom drove from Miami to Ft. Lauderdale daily. And we cleaned the place up and they won culinary awards for the hospital. Thank you IFSEA.

Last month I was invited and attended the national American Culinary Federation (ACF) conference in New Orleans. Because of the volunteer efforts IFSEA and myself did together many years ago, I’m an ACF Life member.

While at the conference, I saw my friends in the Coast Guard recruiting booth. They are short cooks and so there is a \$20,000 bonus for joining the Coast Guard as a culinary specialist. Saw a dozen former IFSEA members and encouraged them to come back, most over 65 years of age. So, for a modest \$25 they can show their faith in our 122-year-old association and warm our hearts that our friends remember our great times. We celebrated the fact that the first military chef is now head of the ACF, Rene Marquis. Observations that many chefs need to do a lot less tasting of their food, and the “kids of today” are not what the chefs remember from days gone by. The lesson here is, if you are a “kid of today” work like you mean it, be different, be the one who shows up every day, who volunteers for the jobs no one wants to do, who comes and leaves with a smile. It’s not hard to stand out. I think I went from E-1 to O-4 by being a good kid, paying attention, doing the work every day. Only 1% of military earn an officer commission, I assure you I wasn’t in the top 1% in brains.

Next two years the ACF conferences will be in Phoenix and Las Vegas. I urge you if you have never gone to an ACF conference, you should go, it is wonderful, great trendy education, old and new friends, exciting competitions for members and students. Happy August to everyone!



From the Mind of a Millennial

Alysha Brooks, MCFBD, MCFE, CHP
Director of Development
Chair Elect



First things first - Happy August IFSEA!

Second, this will be my last article "From the Mind of a Millennial."

I have spent the last few years talking about the industry from the perspective of a millennial - which I have truly enjoyed. I just found that one topic in particular really stuck out to me, and I ended up spending many months speaking about; mental health.

As many of you have read in past articles, I am not shy and am very open about my struggles with mental health. To me, talking about it is extremely important, I feel it saves lives.

For my birthday in February, I bought myself a mic and headphones with the hopes of starting a podcast. I have pulled them out and created a few videos, but I really hadn't dived into the world of podcasting because I wasn't quite sure which direction, I should go in.

The last couple of months, I have spent a lot of time trying to clear out my schedule so I could really make this dream a reality and after a view and incredible calls with several different IFSEA members, I realized - I have an abundance of foodservice professionals right here in this organization that I can interview!

What really makes a great podcast is having that niche and I, yes, foodservice is a niche but, you must be specific... like what can we talk about that will make us stand out?

The other day it came to me. "Plating Positivity: A Podcast of Foodservice and Mental Health"

(the total was generated by Chat GPT)

Moving forward - my IFSEA Newsletter Articles will be my opportunity to speak about the recent interviews and the podcast episodes airing soon!

This is my plan:

Once a month, I will speak with you, one of our members, about their years in food service AND discuss all the positive experiences you have had in the industry - the stories with happy endings, stories of friendships, education, fun and hospitality.

We hear so many of the negative stories about our industry but, when I talk to our members, I don't hear them, I hear a life of FUN and PRIDE. I want to spread this positivity with others in our industry and help the many individuals struggling every day. Not only have our members shared their stories but, personally, I will be forever grateful for the endless support I received from my fellow IFSEA members these last couple years.

Messages, phone calls and emails - from people asking if I needed help, sending kind words, teaching me how to balance my plate and most importantly, giving me grace and allowing me space to grow so I could come back strong.

I feel I am at a place where I can give back to everyone who has helped me and pay it forward to our future foodservice and hospitality listeners that may need that same love, support, and grace.

To set up an interview, please email me at alysha@ifsea.org or visit <https://calendly.com/albrooks-491/platingpositivitypodcast>!



Aloha Diaper Bank

On Sunday, June 25, we had a small meet up of former members and friends of the Aloha Hawaii Branch of IFSEA held at the Aloha Diaper Bank. Their vision is to eliminate diaper needs in the island community so that every child has the opportunity to be clean, dry and healthy. We thought that it would be a perfect time to network and also to help fund-raise for the Aloha Diaper Bank. Despite the small gathering, we had a nice time socializing and catching up with each other. We are looking to schedule another meet up during the Christmas holidays.

Pictured from L-R: Anne Komatsu, Executive Director of the Aloha Diaper Bank, Aloha Hawaii Branch members, Chantal Weaver, Nancy Miura, Gwen Ishizu, Brian Kunihiro and Joyce Lee.

Hello from Julius Harrison, IFSEA Board Member

Brothers and Sisters of IFSEA,

Hope all is doing well. Where have you all been? Have you Heard?

That our own Alysha Brooks has been plating up our social media venture like an "All You Can Eat Open Buffet". Just let me explain. I have had the wonderful opportunity of attending our organization's Social Media Platforms which is put together and managed by Alysha.

She coordinates our monthly "Meet Up" meetings on the last Wednesday of each month at 4 PM eastern time. Next, she handles our Facebook Group 'Hangout', which normally meets on the last Saturday of every month at 8:30 PM eastern time, and finally she manages our organization "Leaders of Hospitality" social platform stage of Clubhouse and it is named "Join Alysha's Room". Again, please let me tell you that these platforms are indeed SPECTACULAR and INSPIRING and I am so glad that I had attended.

Some of the "entrees" that we have been enjoying including Engagement with Staff, Liquor Laws, Managing and Staffing Issues and Motivation. And that is just to name a few. Every session my Brothers and Sisters is a "Dining Experience" of Learning from some of our guest Diners (IFSEA members) that have such a wide variety of Hospitality experience that are indeed relatable.

So, Brothers and Sisters of IFSEA, if you are STARVING to bond with peers and you want a

SMORGASBORD of information and resources to take home as leftovers after having your fill; please make your reservations now for the next buffet. "I did because I'm a GLUTTON for Knowledge.

Hope to see and hear from everyone soon.

Congratulations to Rebecca Smith-Edaburn, CFM.

A note from Dave Zander and Ed Manley that Rebecca scored the highest ever CFM test score. Out of 1400 or so people that have taken this exam in its current format, 7 scored 96, none higher however than Rebecca! She was a caregiver at a long term medical facility but was forced into managing food service recently. From Ed, "Reminded me of me - lol. Not that I ever got in the top 1%, having been a care medic and turned into food service". Congratulations again Rebecca!



2023 SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Congratulations to the IFSEA Scholarship winners for 2023. The following is the scholarship report from Dr. Ernie Boger, scholarship chairman. Thank you Dr. Boger for your continued support and process in chairing this time-honored scholarship program. As you will read below the scholarship committee had 47 applicants which is wonderful and thank you to Michelle Hackman for her coordination and support as well.

Continued thank you to the Worthy Goal Foundation trustees chaired by Past International Chairman Dave Orosz for their contributions especially this year with so much financial up and down. The following is a brief Worthy Goal Fund report as well.

“The Trustees of the Worthy Goal Fund met in mid-July with their financial advisor, despite the current economic situation and the funds decline last year the trustees felt it imperative that they continue to offer the maximum amount possible for the 2023 scholarship program. Therefore, the Trustees allocated and awarded \$15,000 for the scholarship committee to award.” Thank you again Chairman Dave Orosz and your outstanding trustees.

7/19/2023 EB, D.Mgt. IFSEA Scholarship Chairman

IFSEA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS - 2023

ID-STUDENT #	SCHOOL	AWARD & DONOR	AMOUNT	POINTS (35)
				Group-A (3) (33-32)
#2-Grace Katharine Schuler	Drexel U.	Faulstitch Family	\$2,000	33
##32-Casey Salamone	San Diego St. U.	Aloha Hawaii Branch	\$2,000	32
#39-Puleo	U. of Delaware	SC Palmetto Branch	\$2,000	32
				Group-B (5) (31 – 29)
#20Sibgha -Malik	Kendall College	Detroit Branch	\$1,000	31
#29-Dorcas Mensah	Kirkwood (Iowa) C.C.	Lowe Family	\$1,000	31
#34 Uniasha Ocon	U. of Houston	Reno Tahoe Branch	\$1,000	30
#35- Kaleb Austin Johnson	Culinary Institute of America	Dunsmoor Family	\$1,000	29
#6 Jarelyn Dunmars	U. of Houston	Guam Branch	\$1,000	29

				Group-C (5) (28-27)
#7Taylor Flynn	Culinary Institute of America	WGF Trustee John Williams	\$500	28
#30Coralie Brouseau	Johnson & Wales U.	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$500	28
#41Llayda Zeynep Nyet	U. of South FL	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$500	27
#42Emma Coleman	U. of Houston	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$500	27
#45 Ariana Walters	U. of Central FL	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$500	27
				Group-D (4) (26)
#4 Jerick Bradstreet	Holy Cross U.	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$375	26
#11 Olivia R. Linnebur	Colorado Mesa U.	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$375	26
#18 Claudia Langela	Johnson & Wales U.	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$375	26
#28 Kyla Christine Navarro	U. Tenn. Knoxville	IFSEA-Unnamed	\$375	26
47 Total Applications	33 Total Schools	9 Donor Named 8-IFSEA Un-named	Total \$ Awards \$15,000	17 Total Awards 13 Schools

? Did ? You ? Know ?

Eggplant, (Aubergene)

If an eggplant went to a plant psychologist for some veggio-therapy, it's unlikely that the managed care company would authorize enough sessions to cure the addled little bugger. It suffers from an identity crisis that is quite, ahem, deep-rooted. Eggplants don't know what they are, what their name is, or what they do.

To begin, eggplants are not vegetables but fruits and to take it one step further, a berry to be exact. Although we've informally come to define berries as round little fruits that grow in clusters on bushes or small plants, there is a specific botanical definition. A berry is a type of fleshy, indehiscent, (not sprouting open when ripe), fruit that develops from the ovary wall of the plant flower. Technically eggplants, (as well as tomatoes, bananas, chile peppers and avocados) are all berries, and thus fruits.



Next, what do we call this berry? Eggplant? They have nothing to do with eggs other than their oblong shape which spurred their ovular name. But they've also been known by many other terms. Around the time the name eggplant found its way into the vernacular, so did the name "*aubergine*." Eggplant became popular in America while the French, British and other Europeans favored the term aubergine. Aubergine derives from a Sanskrit (ancient Indian language), word meaning "*to cure wind-disorder*," (since eggplants were once thought to alleviate flatulence). The Sanskrit word "*vatinganah*" was successively morphed to "*badingan*" by the Persians, "*al-badinjan*" by the Arabs, "*alberengena*" by the Spanish, and finally aubergine by the French. Imagine if you went through life being known as Bob, then Mary, and then Ralph.

Finally, what do eggplants do? As stated, ancient cultures ascribed them with carminative properties. Medieval Europeans thought they were an aphrodisiac. Sixteenth century Europeans thought they would cause insanity. Some believed the eggplant to be poisonous, (inevitably due to it being a member of the nightshade family). Others thought their only practical use was as ornament. Case in point: Should you or should you not salt eggplants before using them? The rationale behind salting is that salt reduces bitterness and improves texture. There are proponents in both camps but the facts are this: Bitterness in eggplants is caused by certain alkaloids. Even after salting, most of these alkaloids remain. What the salt actually does is obscure our taste sensation of the bitter elements. So salt does reduce bitterness but only via smoke and mirrors. Salt will

(Continued on page 10)

? Did ? You ? Know ?

Eggplant, (Aubergene)

(Continued from page 9)

change the eggplant's texture however. Eggplants have a spongy texture highlighted by numerous air sacs around the cells. Salt will draw out some fluid, thus collapsing the cells upon themselves. One reason you may want to do this is when sautéing eggplant in oil. Its spongy texture will absorb much of the oil. Post-salted eggplant will absorb much less. Or you can simply coat them with a breading before sautéing or frying to inhibit excessive oil assimilation.

There is even debate about how bitter eggplants are to begin with. Like any biological product, certain flavor nuances may vary with the exact species of plant, as well as where and how it's grown. Moreover, there is the variability in peoples' palates. Bitterness is one of the basic flavor elements that our tongues can detect but we don't share identical taste buds. It's entirely possible that biological variation can cause some people to be more sensitive to bitter sensations than others. Generally speaking, it seems that bitterness can sometimes be a factor with the traditional, large eggplants, particularly with older specimens. I think it just simply boils down to whether a person likes the taste of eggplant or not.



Eggplants originated in India, although related varieties may have arisen in China as well. It has been cultivated in India, China and neighboring countries since pre-historical times. Interestingly, eggplants were a latecomer to the Mediterranean region, not being known there until about 1500 years ago. But it was even later before its popularity really took off. The Arabs brought it to Spain by the 12th century where it spread throughout other parts of Europe. It was also one of the first plants introduced into the new world by the Spanish. Eggplant was being grown in Brazil in the 1600's.

In addition to the traditional, egg-shaped eggplants ubiquitous to American supermarkets, there are many other kinds of eggplant. Italian eggplant look like a smaller version of the regular ones but have a more delicate skin and texture. Japanese eggplant are oblong and slender, are often brighter purple, and have a sweeter flesh. There's even a white eggplant which sports a tough skin but smooth flesh. Whatever variety, choose eggplants with a firm, smooth, unblemished skin devoid of any soft spots. Use eggplants as soon as possible. They don't last long even in the fridge. Because they're a tropical plant they don't take well to cold. All eggplants are amenable to a variety of cooking methods including sautéing, pan-frying, deep frying, baking, and especially grilling. Nothing is as delicious or easy as coating thick sliced eggplant with olive oil, salt and pepper and searing it on a hot grill. So whatever it is and whatever you want to call it, just simply enjoy it.

Recipe Box

Eggplant Casserole Recipe serves 8



Avocado oil spray for pan
1 large eggplant (1 ¼ lb), unpeeled
1/4 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 cup marinara sauce
1 cup mozzarella shredded, part-skim, divided (4 oz)
1 tablespoon parmesan dry-grated

Preheat your oven to 500°F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Spray the parchment with avocado oil spray.

Slice the eggplant into ¼-inch thick slices. Arrange the slices on the prepared baking sheet. Spray with avocado oil. Season with kosher salt, black pepper, and garlic powder. Roast the eggplant for 15 minutes.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Turn the eggplant slices to the other side. Spray again with oil. Return to the oven and roast until browned and tender, 10-15 more minutes.

Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 425°F.

Arrange half of the roasted eggplant slices in the bottom of a greased 1-quart casserole dish. Spread half the marinara sauce on top and sprinkle with half of the mozzarella, as shown in the video.

Arrange the remaining eggplant slices on top. Spread the remaining marinara sauce on top. Sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella and with the parmesan.

Bake the eggplant casserole until golden and bubbly, about 15 minutes. Allow it to cool for 10 minutes

Eggplant Rolatini serves 5



4 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons garlic powder, divided
2 cups grated Parmesan cheese, divided
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup vegetable oil for frying
2 large eggplant, peeled and sliced
1 (15 ounce) container ricotta cheese
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1 tablespoon dried parsley
1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 (28 ounce) jar tomato pasta sauce, divided
Local Offers

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

In a shallow mixing bowl combine 3 eggs, 1 tablespoon garlic powder, 1 cup Parmesan cheese, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. In a separate, shallow dish or plate, pour the flour.

Heat oil in a large, deep skillet. Dredge eggplant slices in flour, then in egg mixture and fry slices 2 or 3 at a time in hot oil. Place fried slices on a paper towel lined plate to drain.

In a large bowl combine ricotta, 1/2 cup mozzarella, remaining 1 cup Parmesan, remaining 1 tablespoon garlic powder, 1 egg, parsley and spinach; mix well. Spread about 1/3 of the pasta sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Place about 2 tablespoons of spinach mixture in the center of each eggplant slice and roll securely; place in prepared pan. Pour remaining pasta sauce over eggplant rolls and top with remaining 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes.

Interesting Facts

Watermelon

The watermelon, *Citrullus lanatus*, is a member of the Cucurbitaceae family. Unscientifically speaking it is an iconic summer fruit, a sweet, cool and refreshing treat that no barbeque or summer picnic should be without. And while the watermelon is unequivocally considered an American summer staple, its roots are worlds and millennia away.

Watermelons are indigenous to Africa. They were being cultivated by the ancient Egyptians more than 4,000 years ago. Watermelon seeds were even found in the tomb of King Tut. From the Dark Continent they spread to the Mediterranean region, then to India and finally to China in the 10th through 12th centuries. China is now the world's largest watermelon producer. European slave traders introduced them to the Americas in the 1600's, the same century that the watermelon received its current name. Prior to that they were referred to as citrul (a word with French and Italian origins for citrus), or pasteque, a French-morphed Arab word for watermelon.

There are over 1200 varieties of watermelon ranging from one to 200 pounds. While your average supermarket melon evinces a red colored flesh, there are varieties that sport an orange, white or yellow hue. "Seedless" varieties are somewhat of a misnomer. They still contain small, white, edible seeds. Forty-four US states produce watermelon with Georgia, Florida, Texas, California and Arizona leading the way. They are available May through September with the peak from June to August.

Despite being 92% water, watermelons do contain some nutrients. They are a good source of Vitamins A and C, and also contain lycopene, a compound reputed to have anti-cancer properties. There are a number of other nutrients in the rind, if you're so inclined. In China the rind is pickled, stir-fried and stewed. The Chinese are also fond of the seeds and roast them. Watermelon juice can be made into wine. In southern Russia it's utilized to make beer.

OK, onto the question that everyone has about picking watermelon: How do you choose a ripe one? First, select a specimen that is symmetrical, firm, and free of any bruises or soft spots. Pick it up. It should feel heavy for its size. Is the one side slightly flat with a yellowish spot? That's good. That's where the watermelon rested on the ground ripening in the sun.

Then there's the thump test: The idea that knocking on the watermelon can ascertain its ripeness. I had my doubts about this snippet of common wisdom so I called the National Watermelon Association, a large multi-state organization of watermelon growers and spoke to one of their representatives. Sure enough, they concurred. The woman I spoke to said to thump the watermelon. If a hollow, resonating sound ensued, you were knocking on a ripe one.

Uncut watermelons can be left at room temperature for up to two weeks but it is recommended using them within a week. Like any natural product, age does not bode well for taste. Try to avoid purchasing pre-cut watermelon unless you plan to use it expediently. Once cut, the watermelon must be refrigerated.



SEASONALS

for **AUGUST**

APPLES

BEETS

BLACKBERRIES

BROCCOLI

CABBAGE

CARROTS

CAULIFLOWER

CUCUMBERS

GREEN BEANS

HERBS

KALE

LEEKs

MELONS

ONIONS

PEACHES

PEPPERS

PLUMS

POTATOES

RADICCHIO

RASPBERRIES

SQUASH

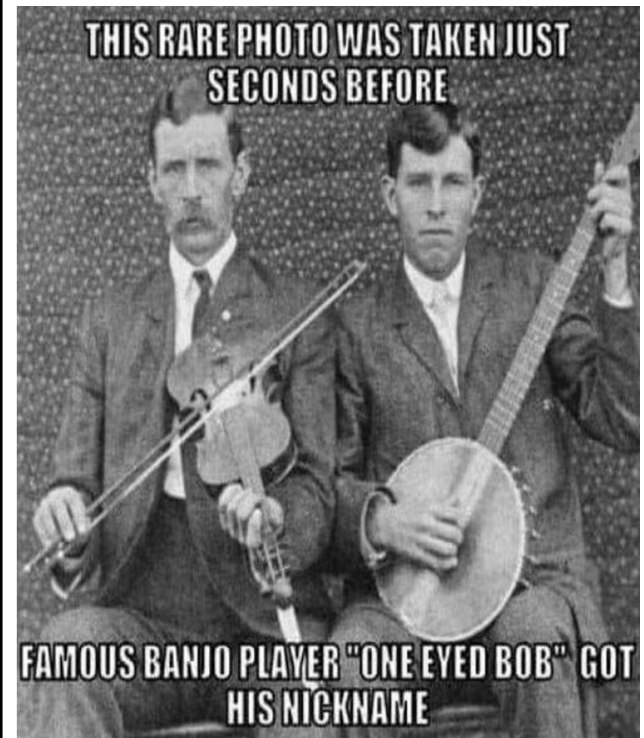
TOMATOES

ZUCCHINI

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RANdom sTuff



"Once we finish with your blood pressure, we need to find out why your arm is purple."



"THE DOCTOR TOLD ME I NEEDED TO BURN SOME FAT, SO I'M GRILLING A STEAK!"