

FARMERS' MARKET POPSICLES

BY JENNIFER CHANDLER



There is nothing more refreshing on a sweltering, summer day than an ice-cold popsicle.

Homemade fruit pops and creamsicles are a great way to use up all the juicy, sweet fruits that are currently available at our local farmers' markets.

It's a breeze to make these summer treats. All you need is a blender and some molds. (And if you don't have ice pop molds, you can use short plastic or disposable cups and popsicle sticks.)

My kids love making homemade popsicles with me. Instead of eating the artificially colored, high-fructose pops, my children are licking (and actually preferring) popsicles made from nutritious, locally-grown fruits.

Stone fruits, such as peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums, work well. So do local berries and melons. Fresh herbs can add an interesting twist to classic fruit flavors. Even tomatoes (technically a fruit) make a refreshing, frozen appetizer or between-course palate cleanser.

The only difficult thing about making these frozen treats is waiting for them to freeze before you can eat them! *eM*

Jennifer Chandler is the author of *Simply Salads*. Watch for her new cookbook, *Simply Suppers*, arriving at bookstores later this summer.



PEACHES AND CREAM POPSICLES

- 1 cup peeled and finely chopped peaches
- 1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt

Purée 1/3 cup of the peaches in a blender or food processor until smooth. In a medium bowl, stir together the peach purée, yogurt and remaining 2/3 cup of peaches until well combined. Spoon into popsicle molds and insert sticks. Freeze for at least 4 hours. Makes 4 servings.

Tip: For extra-sweet popsicles, add a tablespoon of honey to the mixture.

Variation: This recipe works well with all summer fruits. Try substituting strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, or even blackberries for the peaches.

TOMATO-MINT POPS

- 4 ripe, medium tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Combine the tomatoes, water, orange zest, orange juice, mint, sugar and salt in a large pan. Cover and cook on medium-high heat until the tomatoes are very soft and the liquid thickens, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer the mixture to a blender or food processor. Carefully purée until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Chill until the mixture is cold.

Spoon the tomato mixture into the popsicle molds and insert sticks. Freeze for at least 4 hours. Makes 6 servings. **Variation:** Substitute fresh basil for the mint.

MELON POPSICLES

Cantaloupe Layer

- 1 small ripe cantaloupe, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the Cantaloupe Layer: Place the cantaloupe, water, lemon juice and sugar in a blender and purée. Pour the juice into molds, filling each only 1/3 full. Insert sticks and freeze for 20 minutes, or until firm.

Watermelon Layer

- 1 small ripe watermelon, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the Watermelon Layer: Place the watermelon, water, lemon juice and sugar in a blender and purée. Pour the juice into molds, filling each only 2/3 full. Freeze for 20 minutes, or until firm.

For the Honeydew Melon Layer: Place the honeydew melon, water, lemon juice and sugar in a blender and purée. Pour the juice into molds, filling them full. Freeze for at least 4 hours, or until hardened. Makes 8 servings.

Honeydew Layer

- 1 small ripe honeydew, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

Variation: Any of these melon purées would make delicious popsicles on their own. For an extra burst of summer flavor, consider adding fresh herbs, such as mint or basil.

Making the stick...stick If the popsicle sticks will not stand up when placed in the fruit purée, partially freeze the mixture for 10 to 15 minutes before inserting them.

Adjusting the sugar Depending on how sweet your fruit is, you may or may not need to add sugar, so taste the fruit before you begin.

POPSICLES WITH A LOCAL TWIST

Blackberry Basil • Cantaloupe Mint • Watermelon Mint • Strawberry Peach • Bloody Mary (add a pinch of BBQ rub) • Cucumber Lemon • Spiked Sugar Baby Watermelon • Blackberry Lemon Thyme • Mint Mojito • Plum • Banana Blueberry • Frozen Chicory Café Au Lait