

PRESSEMITTEILUNG

European Solar Greenhouses bring the summer home: peak season for watermelons begins

- **Watermelons from Spanish solar greenhouses are particularly sustainable and environmentally friendly, as the production method specifically uses solar energy, optimizes the consumption of water and arable land, and uses biological pest control.**
- **The fruity deliciousness contains not only valuable ingredients for health but can also be enjoyed in many ways.**

Frankfurt, 24. Mai 2022 – The first watermelons of the year come from the solar greenhouses of the southern Spanish coastal regions and are already delivered from Spain to Germany at the beginning of May. They are grown using environmentally friendly and efficient cultivation methods. In this way, the taste of summer can be enjoyed with a full guarantee. The [Cute Solar](#) campaign is supported by the European Union and has set itself the task of providing in-depth insights into the cultivation of fruit and vegetables within the EU.

Last season, the area under watermelon cultivation in Spanish solar greenhouses was 9,677 hectares¹. This achieves a production capacity of 555,000 tons of watermelons per year, of which 463,000 tons are shipped to the EU domestic market. Almost 184,000 tons are delivered to Germany alone, which represents about 40 % of exports to Europe². The observed development over the last five years shows that the demand for sustainable fruits and vegetables not only remains, but even continues to grow in popularity. This is accompanied by an increase in productivity and delivery volumes to Germany.

Watermelons are considered the epitome of summer and their sweet flesh refreshes us on hot days. The first delivery of the season of sustainable watermelons from southern Spain brings anticipation for the summer of 2022. The consistent growing conditions in the solar greenhouses provide fruit and vegetables of excellent quality. The greenhouses are designed to capture sunlight and energy through their translucent structure, while protecting the plants from adverse weather conditions. This sustainable as well as ideal microclimate makes it possible to avoid the use of fossil fuels for heating or lighting the crops.

¹ <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/estadistica/temas/estadisticas-agrarias/agricultura/superficies-producciones-anuales-cultivos/>

² Source: EUROSTAT <https://comercio.serviciosmin.gob.es/Datacomex/>

In addition to its intense flavor, this miracle crop also offers many health benefits: for example, watermelon not only contains vitamins such as A and B9, but also is low in calories³. On hot summer days, it offers welcome refreshment with its 92% water, which is incidentally low in sodium and free of fat and cholesterol.

"The start of the watermelon season is very special every year. It's how we bring our summery, light lifestyle to Germany and other countries. Our watermelons are grown exclusively in solar greenhouses in sunny southern Spain. They impress with their unique quality and long-term sustainability," explains Francisco Góngora, President of HORTIESPAÑA.

Watermelons can be used in a variety of ways in the kitchen. Whether it's a cool ice cream or refreshing lemonade in the hot midday sun, or a light and hearty watermelon feta salad at a barbecue, watermelon always brings a fruity, fresh twist and there's something for everyone. Our tangy watermelon smoothie shows just how versatile watermelon can be!

Aromatic and exciting: spicy watermelon smoothie

For 4 servings:

400 g watermelon

2 oranges

2 tablespoons honey

Lime juice

Tabasco

2 stalks of mint

Salt and pepper, from the mill

Preparation:

Remove the seeds from the juicy watermelon pulp and put it in a blender. Then squeeze the juice from the oranges and add it together with honey and plucked mint leaves. Now puree everything together finely and then season well with lime juice, Tabasco, salt, and pepper. If necessary, add a little more water. Garnish the glasses as desired with the remaining mint leaves and enjoy.

Tip: It is best to leave the smoothie in the refrigerator for 1 hour before serving.

What is a solar greenhouse?

A solar greenhouse is a closed structure covered with a plastic film through which the sun's rays shine, giving the plants the light they need to maintain the right temperature for their development during the winter months, so that they can carry out photosynthesis. In the process, plants produce nutrients from the CO₂ they absorb from the air and release enormous amounts of oxygen into the atmosphere. Solar greenhouses are very different from the production methods of other greenhouses, which use fossil fuel-

³ According to the definitions of nutrition claims as presented in Regulation (EC) No. 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims

based heating and lighting systems that consume up to 30% more energy and are therefore harmful to the environment.

What is NOT a solar greenhouse?

A greenhouse with solar panels that convert light energy into electrical energy, which can then be used for artificial heating or lighting of plants.

About Cute Solar

Cute Solar: Cultivating the Taste of Europe in Solar Greenhouses is a program promoted by **APROA**, the Association of Producer Organizations of Fruit and Vegetables in Andalusia, **HORTIESPAÑA**, the Spanish Interprofessional Organization of Fruit and Vegetables, and the Association of European Producer Regions of Fruit and Vegetables, **AREFLH**, with the aim of informing European consumers about the specificities of agricultural production methods in solar greenhouses. It addresses key aspects such as sustainability and environmental impact, as well as safety, quality, and traceability of the products.

The program, with a total investment of €1.95 million, is co-financed by the proposing organizations and the European Union, will run for three years (2020-2022), and will be implemented in Spain, Germany, and Belgium.

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Pressekontakt

markenzeichen GmbH
Rebekka Hans
Schwedlerstraße 6
60314 Frankfurt am Main
Tel: +49 (0) 159 0680 39 65
E-Mail: r.hans@markenzeichen.de
Internet: www.markenzeichen.de