

## MELON AND PROSCUITTO SALAD

2 MEDIUM-SIZED MELONS, PREFERABLY DIFFERENT TYPES  
4 LIMES  
1/3 LB OF PROSCUITTO OR SERRANO HAM  
1 RED SERRANO CHILI  
FRESH BASIL, MINT, TARRAGON, AND CHIVES

AN HOUR BEFORE SERVING, CUT THE MELONS IN HALF, REMOVE THE SEEDS AND CUT INTO 6 SLICES. USING A THIN-BLADED KNIFE, SLICE THE RINDS FROM THE FLESH.

NOTE: IF YOU WANT TO MAKE MELON SHOOTERS TO ACCOMPANY THE SALAD, SQUEEZE AS MUCH JUICE AS YOU CAN FROM THE RINDS AND STRAIN JUICE INTO A GLASS MEASURING CUP OR A BOWL.

CUT ONE MELON INTO TRIANGULAR CHUNKS. SCOOP BALLS OF FLESH FROM THE OTHER MELON. PLACE IN A CERAMIC OR GLASS SALAD BOWL AND REFRIGERATE UNTIL YOU'RE READY TO ASSEMBLE THE SALAD.

REMOVE ZEST FROM THE LIMES WITH A MICROPLANE. SLICE LIMES IN HALF AND SQUEEZE JUICE INTO A BOWL ALONG WITH THE ZEST.

REMOVE SEEDS FROM THE SERRANO CHILI WITH A SMALL, THIN KNIFE. SLICE CHILI CROSSWISE INTO PAPER-THIN DISKS. (USE RUBBER GLOVES IF YOU'VE GOT THEM. IF NOT, REMEMBER NOT TO TOUCH YOUR EYES AFTER YOU'VE HANDLED THE CHILIS. WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST.)

PLUCK THE LEAVES FROM THE BRANCHES OF THE HERBS. YOU SHOULD HAVE ABOUT 2 CUPS.

STACK THE SLICES OF PROSCUITTO, ROLL AND SLICE CROSSWISE INTO JULIENNE STRIPS.

TO ASSEMBLE THE SALAD, LIGHTLY SALT AND PEPPER THE MELON PIECES. TOSS GENTLY WITH LIME JUICE, ZEST AND SERRANO CHILI. ROUGHLY CHOP THE HERBS AND ADD TO THE BOWL. TURN A COUPLE OF TIMES WITH A RUBBER SPATULA.

APPORTION MELON SALAD IN EIGHT BOWLS. SCATTER WITH PROSCUITTO AND SERVE.

OPTIONAL EXTRA: MELON SHOOTERS

CHILL 8 SHOT OR CORDIAL GLASSES  
COMBINE MELON JUICE AND VODKA, GIN OR TEQUILA  
1/3 ALCOHOL TO 2/3 MELON JUICE  
GARNISH EACH WITH A STRIP OF LIME ZEST

SERVES 8