Chinese Medicine: Some Foods for Summer

The Wu Xin or Five Phases includes the five seasons: Spring, Summer, Late Summer, Autumn and Fall.

Summer Season corresponds to the Fire Element and Late Summer corresponds to the Earth Element. Summer is the season when both Qi & Blood move vigorously throughout the body and over exposure to external heat can result in diarrhea or Sunstroke.
Fruits and vegetables provide a source of fluids and promote digestion.
Foods that keep the body cool include: Cucumber, Mung Beans, Lotus Root or Leaf; Watermelon, Bitter Melon, Coix (Job’s Tears)

**Bitter Melon:** Ku Gua, Momordica charantia
Bitter, Cold
Stomach, Heart, Liver
Clears Heat, Alleviates thirst
Summerheat or Warm Disease
Seeds are used to topically to treat sores that are slow to heal and swellings from sprains and fractures
Avoid: if trying to conceive

**Cucumber:** Huang Gua, Cucumis sativus
Sweet, Cold
Nourishes Stomach and Urinary Bladder
Clears Heat, Eliminates Toxins, Alleviates Thirst, Promotes Urination, Reduces Edema
Can be applied externally to soothe red, swollen dry eyes; regenerates the skin and heals sunburn.

**Mung Beans:** Lu Dou, Phaseoli radiate Semen
Sweet & Cold
Nourishes Heart & Stomach
Clears Heat from the exterior of the body; Dispels Summer Heat; Alleviates Thirst
Targets some Skin Disorders & Relieves Toxicity
Helps to reduce ‘blood fat’ (triglycerides) and renew blood vessels
Caution: Spleen Qi Vacuity type Diarrhea (chronic loose or watery diarrhea, reduced appetite, abdominal distention after a meal)
Sweet Soup with Mung Beans & Job’s Tears (Aileen Yeoh, The Tao of Eating and Healing)
This sweet soup is traditionally given to Chinese children during the hot summer months when they suffer from sunburn, sores and boils. It is also good for adults with acne caused by the sun.

1 oz (25g) Mung Beans
1 oz (25g) Job’s Tears
tiny pinch Sea Salt
Barley Malt (Yi Tang) Extract

1. Wash the beans and soak them overnight.
2. The next day, wash Job’s Tears, add them and plenty of water to the mung beans and boil until the beans are soft.
3. Add a pinch of Sea Salt and simmer for another 15 minutes
4. Sweeten the soup with Barley Malt Extract and serve

Note: Thinner soup is ‘cooler’ than thicker soup

Sweet Soup with Mung Beans & Fresh Lotus Leaf (Aileen Yeoh, The Tao of Eating and Healing)
This sweet soup is good for children and adults with prickly heat or heat rash:

1 oz (25g) Mung Beans
1 Fresh Lotus Leaf
pinch Sea Salt
Barley Malt Extract

1. Wash the beans and soak them overnight.
2. The next day, boil them in their soaking water with the lotus leaf until the beans are soft
3. Add a pinch of Sea Salt and simmer for another 15 minutes
4. Sweeten the soup with Barley Malt Extract and serve

Note: If fresh lotus leaf is not available, use dried lotus leaf or dried lotus petals (available from a Chinese herbalist)

Lotus Leaf: He Ye, Nelumbinus Folium
Bitter, Slightly Sweet, Neutral
Heart, Liver, Spleen
Clears Heat, Resolves Summer Heat, Raises Clear Yang, Stops Bleeding

Watermelon: Xi Gua, Citrulli Fructus, Citrullus lanatus
Sweet and Cold
Nourishes: Heart, Stomach and Urinary Bladder
Clears Summer Heat, Alleviates Restlessness, Relieves Thirst, Promotes Urination
Caution: Diabetics should limit or avoid; additional caution for Spleen Qi Vacuity type Diarrhea
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References:


Illustrations:
Bitter Melon: supplements-score-card.com
Cucumber: organicfacts.net
Mung Beans: lepetitoeuf.com
Lotus Leaf: treknature.com
Watermelon: medicalnewstoday.com