

Cucumber

A cucumber is a fruit, part of the gourd family, Cucurbitaceae that also includes squash, melons, and gourds. Cucumbers grow from a creeping vine that roots in a sandy soil, it grows up trellises (supporting frames) and contains large leaves that form a canopy over the fruit. Although cucumbers are a fruit, they are prepared and eaten as vegetables, much like tomatoes and squash. Cucumbers contain 90% of water and are a good source of Vitamin A and C, potassium, manganese, dietary fiber and magnesium.



Nutrition Information

In $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cucumber slices with peel included, there are...

8 calories
1 mg of Sodium
2 g total Carbohydrate
1 g of Sugar
1 percent Calcium
1 percent Iron
2 percent Vitamin C

Cucumbers are low in saturate fat, cholesterol and sodium.

Cucumbers are a great sources of...

Vitamin A
Pantothenic Acid
Magnesium
Phosphorus
Manganese
Vitamin C
Vitamin K
Potassium

Selection

There are a variety of cucumbers to choose from, each offering their own unique distinguishable traits



Armenian Cucumbers:

Shape: Long and Thin
Color: Variegated in darker and lighter shades of light green or yellowish-green
Flavor: Fresh
Best Eaten: Raw
Pickling: NO

English Cucumbers

Shape: Long and Thin
Color: Dark Green
Flavor: Almost non-existent
Best Eaten: Raw
Pickling: NO

Garden Cucumbers

Shape: Thick and smooth outer skin
Color: Dark Green
Flavor: Mild, almost non-existent flavor
Best Eaten: Due to waxy coating, it is recommended that his type of cucumber be peeled before eating.
Pickling: YES

Kirby Cucumbers

Shape: Short and thick
Color: Dark green
Flavor: Fresh and almost non-existent
Best Eaten: Raw or in pickled form
Pickling: YES

Lemon Cucumbers

Shape: Look similar to a lemon, round with thin skin
Color: Yellow
Flavor: Sweet taste
Best Eaten: Raw or pickled
Pickling: YES

Persian Cucumbers

Shape: Similar to the English Cucumber, but shorter and bumpier
Color: Dark Green
Flavor: Non-existent
Best Eaten: Raw
Pickling: NO

Cucumber

Preservation: Freezing and Drying

Cucumbers when frozen should be sliced or chopped, covered with vinegar and frozen. Also, cucumbers can be dried. However, their seeds are dried rather than the cucumber itself.



Handling and Storage

Unpeeled cucumbers should be washed in cold water to remove any soil or other remaining dirt. Cucumbers should be refrigerated in a plastic bag as soon as possible after purchase. They should be kept for about a week under these conditions.

Preparing Raw

Cucumbers are best in this form, peeled or unpeeled, and are traditionally used in salads or vegetable trays.

When Cooked

Cucumbers can be sliced, dipped in batter and fried until crisp and later flavored with a little olive oil and herbs. They can also be added to soups and stews.

Baked

Cucumbers can be stuffed and baked. Utilizing the shell, hollow out the entire shell by chopping the inner cucumber and fill with desired filling.



Recipes

Cucumber recipes are arranged from easiest to prepare, to most difficult to prepare.

2. Watermelon-Cucumber Popsicles

Servings: 10-12
From: Chef Deborah Racicot

Ingredients

2 cups sugar
4 pounds seedless watermelon
1 pound cucumber

2 limes, juiced
Dash of salt

Directions

1. Place the sugar and 2 cups of water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Set aside to cool completely.
2. Cut the watermelon into chunks, discarding the rind.
3. Peel the cucumbers, and cut into pieces
4. Puree each in a blender (4 cups of watermelon puree and 2 cups of cucumber should be produced)
5. Combine the two purees with 2 cups of sugar syrup and blend until smooth.
6. Strain the mixture through a sieve to remove any remaining lumps.
7. Stir in the lime juice and a pinch of salt.
8. Pour the mixture into Popsicle molds, and freeze for several hours until hard.

1. Plain Jane Cucumbers

Ingredients

Any sized or type of cucumber

Directions

1. Rinse cucumbers briefly under cold water
2. Cut into ¼ inch slices
3. Enjoy

3. Gloria Logue's Cucumber

Avocado Dip

From: George R. McTyre
B's Cucumber Pages, April 21, 2002

Ingredients

1 tomato
2 cucumbers
2 cups sour cream
1 package dried Italian salad dressing mix
1 avocado, peeled and diced

Directions

1. Peel, seed and dice tomato
2. Peel, split lengthwise, seed and dice cucumbers.
3. Thoroughly drain all liquid from tomato and cucumbers.
4. Mix all ingredients and chill before serving.
5. Serve with chips or vegetables.

4. Cucumber, Tomato, Mint Salad

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 5

Inspired by Paula Dean, Food Network

Ingredients

10 ounces goat cheese
2 to 4 ripe tomatoes
4 medium sized cucumbers, thinly sliced
2 small white onions (Vidalia will work great for this if they are available), julienned
20 mint leaves
½ cup white vinegar
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper

Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, crumble the goat cheese.
2. Add tomatoes, cucumbers, and onions to the bowl
3. Cut mint leaves, chiffonade-style into shreds and add to the salad.
4. Add vinegar and olive oil and mix well.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste
6. Refrigerate for 1 hour, and then serve.

5. Spicy Pickled Cucumbers

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 6-8

From: Tyler Florence, Food Network

Ingredients

4 Kirby cucumbers or 2 regular cucumbers, sliced thin
2 fresh red Thai Chilies, seeded and sliced thin
1 handful of fresh mint
½ cup rice wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon kosher salt

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
2. Let sit for at least 1 hour for the flavors to blend.
3. Taste and adjust the seasoning.
4. Will keep in the refrigerator for 3 days.