# CUCUMBER

**CUCUMBERS** are a summer vegetable, available in the Northeast from June to August. Although many people think of a cucumbers as a long, green fruit, there are many other varieties of cucumbers. Some are round and yellow but taste the same as green cukes; these are lemon cucumbers. Look for them from your farmer and try eating one as you would an apple! Cucumbers are thought to have been originally cultivated in India.

## **STORAGE**

- Cucumbers need to be stored in the refrigerator in order to retain their moisture.
- They will keep well for up to 10 days in the refrigerator drawer if they are kept whole.
- Once they have been cut, cucumbers will deteriorate quickly.

## **PREPARATION**

- Wash the outside skin of the cucumber to remove any dirt.
- ◆ You can either **peel** the cucumber **or leave the skin on**. If the skin is tough but you don't want to peel it, try running a fork over the skin. This will break the skin and soften the texture.
- ♦ Cucumbers are delicious when eaten raw in salads, made into a chilled soup or dip, or blended, puréed or grated into a chilled vegetable soup stock.
- ♦ If you do not enjoy the texture of the seeds, slice the cucumber in half lengthwise and scoop them out.

## Cucumber is a great tasting portable snack!

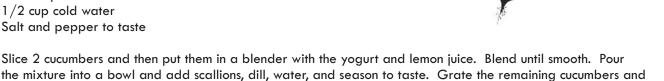
#### **Nutritional Information**

Cucumbers are an excellent source of vitamin K and a good source of vitamin C. Vitamin K is involved in blood clotting. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption.

## **Cucumber Recipes**

### Chilled Cucumber Soup (Serves 3-4)

- 3 medium cucumbers, washed, and peeled if you prefer
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 scallions or garlic tops, thinly sliced
- 1 Tablespoon fresh minced dill
- 1/2 cup cold water
- Salt and pepper to taste



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#### **Cucumber Salad**

4 medium-sized cucumbers, washed and peeled if you prefer, thinly sliced

add it to the soup. Chill at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 3 or 4 servings.

- 1 large onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 1/3 cup non-fat sour cream
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 2 Tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional)
- 1 teaspoon mustard



In a large bowl, mix yogurt, sour cream, dill, mayonnaise, vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar and mustard. Add cucumbers and onions. Mix well and chill in the refrigerator.

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#### Israeli Salad

- 6 large tomatoes, cut into bite-size chunks
- 2 medium cucumbers, diced
- 2 red or green bell peppers, diced
- 1 red or white sweet onion, diced
- 4 Tablespoons minced parsley
- 4 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice (juice of one lemon)
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

Feta cheese, crumbled (optional)

In a salad bowl, combine all prepared vegetables. In a small bowl, using a whisk combine parsley, lemon juice, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Pour over vegetables, mix gently and serve. Garnish with feta cheese.

Recipe adapted from Cooking at the Natural Gourmet by Debra Stark, copyright 1991 by Scarecrow Enterprises.

