

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



Slice 2 cucumbers and then put them in a blender with the yogurt and lemon juice. Blend until smooth. Pour the mixture into a bowl and add scallions, dill, water, and season to taste. Grate the remaining cucumbers and add it to the soup. Chill at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 3 or 4 servings.

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Cucumber Salad

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