Cucumber

Introduction
The cucumber is a tender, warm-season vegetable that produces quickly when watering is consistent. When watering is irregular or insufficient, plants produce oddly-shaped and poor-tasting cucumbers. Cucumbers are great for hydration, detoxification and getting rid of bad breath.

Preservation
Storing:
- Refrigerate cucumbers immediately after harvesting. Store for up to 3 days in open or perforated plastic bags.
- If cooking cucumbers, soak in salt water first to remove some of the naturally high water content and prevent dilution of the dish.
- Do not peel to increase nutritional value.

Freezing (sweet pickles):
- Mix 2 qts cucumbers (peeled and thinly sliced), 1 onion (thinly sliced) and 1 tbsp salt in a large bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Leave for 2 hours and then drain.
- Combine 1-1/2 cups sugar and 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar. Stir well and pour over cucumbers.
- Pack into air-tight freezer bags or containers and immediately place in freezer. Pickles are ready to eat in 3-4 days.

Pickling:
- Boil 3 cups water, 3 cups vinegar, and 6 tbsp salt.
- In a 1-quart jar place a layer of dill, 1 clove of garlic, and 1/2 tbsp of mustard seed.
- Wash cucumbers and add to jar. Add another layer of dill when halfway full.
- Pour hot water into jars, leaving ½ inch of head space. Seal and process in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes.
- Makes 2 1-quart jars.

Nutritional Benefits
Cucumber

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitamins</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable state</th>
<th>Use by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickled</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cucumber

Recipe 1: Cucumber Salad

Ingredients
- 2 cucumbers, cubed
- 1/2 cup red onion, diced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
- 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh oregano, chopped
- salt and pepper

Directions
- Mix ingredients in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Toss with your favorite vinaigrette or olive oil (optional).
- Best when served chilled.

Recipe 2: Chilled Cucumber-Tahini & Herb Soup

Ingredients
For soup:
- 2 medium cucumbers, peeled and cubed
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup each of fresh dill, basil and parsley
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/8 tsp of cayenne
- 4-6 ice cubes
- salt and pepper, to taste

For chickpeas:
- 1 (15oz) can chickpeas, rinsed, drained and patted dry
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Directions
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Toss chickpeas in seasoning and place in a single layer on well-greased baking sheet. Bake until brown, about 15-20 minutes.
- Place all soup ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. If necessary, add a little water to thin. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve soup chilled. Top with chickpeas and garnish with more fresh herbs.