



# Cucumber

## Growing & Harvest Info

Cucumbers require a long growing season and are usually ready for harvest 50–75 days after planting. Sow seeds at least 2 weeks after the last spring frost, in well-drained, moist soil and full sun. Add compost to enrich the soil. Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 3–5 feet apart for bush varieties and 1 foot apart for vine varieties. Add mulch later to retain soil moisture. Use trellising for vine varieties and water cucumber plants consistently.

Harvest cucumbers when they are 6–8 inches long. Cut cucumbers off the vine with a sharp knife, leaving at least 1 inch of stem. Wear gloves to protect your hands from prickly leafstalks and stems! Overripe cucumbers have a bitter taste, so be sure to harvest them as they are ready to avoid over-ripening.

## Nutritional Benefits

*Cucumber*

Source	Rating
Vitamins	GOOD
Minerals	MODERATE
Fiber	MODERATE

## 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 1/2 inch of head space. Seal and process in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes.
- Makes 2 1-quart jars.

Vegetable state	Use by
Raw	3 days
Frozen	1 year
Pickled	1 year



# Cucumber

*Cucumbers are over 90% water, so they are very low in nutrients. The green peel is actually the most nutritional part! It contains some fiber and vitamin A.*

## Prepare cucumber like this:



## Try cucumber in:



## 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.