

ABOUT CUCUMBERS



This vine plant belongs to the same family as watermelon, pumpkins, zucchini, and other squash. The world's largest cucumber was grown in southern China; it was 67 inches long and weighed 154 pounds! One half cup of sliced cucumbers has just 8 calories and is a good source of vitamin K and potassium. The phrase "cool as a cucumber" comes from the fact that cucumbers are made almost entirely of water, making them feel cool inside.



Choose:

- ◆ Fresh ones that have bright green color, with a firm and stout texture

Avoid:

- ◆ Cucumbers with wrinkled ends and yellowing indicated loss of water

Storage:

Cucumbers should be stored at room temperature because they are sensitive to temperatures below 50°F and may develop "chilling injuries" including water-soaked areas, pitting, and accelerated decay. If you like cold cucumbers, refrigerate them the day you plan on preparing them. Cucumbers are also highly sensitive to ethylene (a natural plant hormone released in the form of a gas) and should be kept away from bananas, melons, and tomatoes.

Serving Tip:

- ◆ Cucumbers are delicious sliced and drizzled with a little of your favorite vinaigrette.
- ◆ Cucumbers can add crunch to your sandwiches.



CUCUMBERS

Cucumber Limeade



Yield: 4 servings
Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

2 cucumbers (about 3/4 pound), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch chunks
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
2 cups water
1 1/2 cups ice cubes

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until cucumber and ice are completely smooth.
2. Pour into glasses and serve.

Fruit coolers usually come in a variety of fresh fruit flavors. Here cucumber is a refreshing vegetable alternative, which balances the assertive lime. Next time you think of setting up a lemonade stand, why not try this instead!

Notes: _____

CUCUMBERS

Cucumber-Lime Pops

Yield: 8 servings
Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Ingredients

1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon water
1/4 cup mint leaves, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and
pureed (approx. 1-1/4 cups)
1/2 teaspoon unflavored powdered gelatin



You will also need 8 small disposable cups and 8 popsicle sticks.

Directions

1. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, 1/4 cup water, and the mint and bring to a boil. Cover, remove from heat and let stand for 15 minutes. Strain the mint syrup into a large bowl and let cool to room temperature. Whisk in the lime juice and cucumber puree.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over the remaining 1 tablespoon of water and let stand until softened, 5 minutes. Microwave the mixture at high power for 8 seconds, until the gelatin dissolves. Wisk the gelatin into the cucumber mixture.
3. Arrange eight 2-ounce paper cups on a baking sheet. Pour the popsicle mixture into the cups and freeze for 1 hour, until partially frozen. Insert a stick in the center of each cup and freeze for 1 hour longer, or until fully frozen. Tear off the paper and serve.

Notes: _____

CUCUMBERS

Cucumber Dill Salad



Yield: 6 servings
Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

3 medium cucumbers, cut in half lengthwise and slices crosswise
1/4 cup onion, thinly sliced
1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
3/4 teaspoon salt (add more or less as needed)
Pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Mix sour cream, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and dill together in a bowl.
2. Add cucumbers and onions. Stir to combine.
3. Serve immediately or refrigerate up to 1 hour.



Encourage your child to help out by asking them to mix while you add ingredients.

Notes: _____
