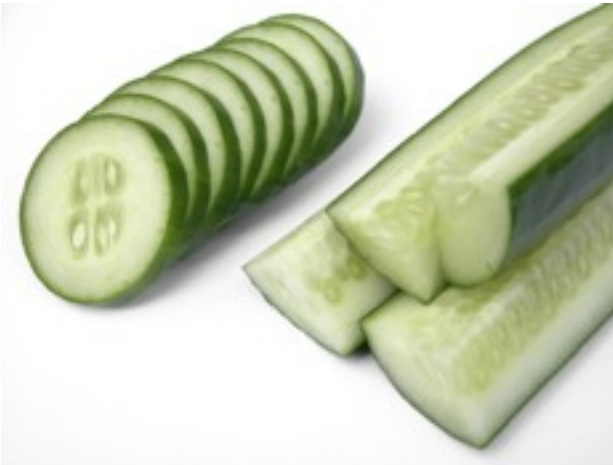


Cucumbers

Domesticated in India around 1500 BCE. Spread throughout the world forming many varieties: small and thin, short and thick, long and ribbed, and the list goes on. The flesh of cucumbers is a very good source of vitamins A, C, and folic acid. The hard skin is rich in fiber and a variety of minerals.



TIPS:

Short-term Storage: Store dry, in plastic in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Long-term Storage: Pickles. Will not freeze well.

General Cooking Info: Mostly cucumbers are eaten raw. But using them in cooked recipes can help with the surpluses in the summer! Some varieties have bitter skins, and should be peeled.

Pickling Cucumbers



Lemon Cucumbers



Fancy Burpless Cucumbers



Balsamic Cucumber Salad

4 roma or vine ripe tomatoes
 1 medium cucumber
 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
 1/4 tsp sugar
 2 tsp chopped fresh basil
 Freshly ground black pepper
 to taste

Slice tomatoes and cucumber thinly and place in a medium bowl. Combine vinegar, oil and sugar. Drizzle over sliced tomatoes and cucumber. Toss, then sprinkle with chopped basil. Refrigerate or serve at room temperature.

Cucumber Soup (served hot or cold)

Ingredients
 2 cucumbers
 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion
 2 tablespoons margarine
 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 4 cups chicken broth
 1 tablespoon farina
 salt to taste
 1/8 tablespoon dried tarragon
 1/2 cup sour cream
 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1. Peel, seed, and chop 2 cucumbers.
 2. Cook the chopped scallions in the margarine until soft. Add the chopped cucumbers and the wine vinegar. Pour in the broth, and stir in the farina. Salt to taste, and add tarragon. Let the soup simmer for 20 minutes, or until the cucumbers are soft.
 3. Put the soup into a blender, and puree it.
 4. Pour the puree into a bowl, and whisk in the sour cream. Taste the soup for seasoning. Pour the soup into bowls, and garnish with cucumber slices and chopped parsley.

from Allrecipes.com

Lox and Cream Cheese Stuffed Cucumbers

2 unwaxed cucumbers
 1 (8-ounce) container cream cheese, softened
 1 (8-ounce) container sour cream
 1 (3-ounce) package smoked salmon, chopped into small pieces
 1 shallot, diced
 1/2 lemon, juiced, seeds removed
 1 bunch fresh dill, chopped

Pinch salt and fresh ground pepper

Using a peeler, create stripes on the outside of the cucumber by peeling along length of cucumber, leaving every other section intact. Cut off ends of cucumber and slice into 1-inch rounds. Using a melon baller, scoop out the seeds and inner flesh from the top 2/3's of each cucumber slice. Do not scoop all of the way through. Set aside. In a bowl, combine equal parts cream cheese and sour cream. Mix in salmon, shallots, lemon juice, salt and pepper, combining thoroughly. Transfer the mixture to a pastry bag with a star 8 tip. Pipe the filling generously into each cucumber section. Garnish with sprig of dill. As an alternative, use red pepper cream cheese.

from Sandra Lee