

# Cucumbers

Although cucumbers require a lot of care in the field, they are usually not demanding in the kitchen. This is an excellent opportunity to vine out into the exciting world of cucumber cookery. Having been around the world a time or two—from India to Rome to the Americas—cucumbers are featured in a plethora of ethnic dishes.

## STORAGE

Store unwashed cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the vegetable crisper bin for about a week. Keep cucumbers tucked far away from tomatoes, apples, and citrus—these give off ethylene gas that accelerates cucumber deterioration.

### A Shareholder

I imagine that picking a cucumber for every box is a prickly event, so I want to say thanks. I got to eat mine today, and it was the best cucumber that I have ever eaten. It tasted of sun and clean water and reminded me of my dad's vegetable patch when I was a kid.

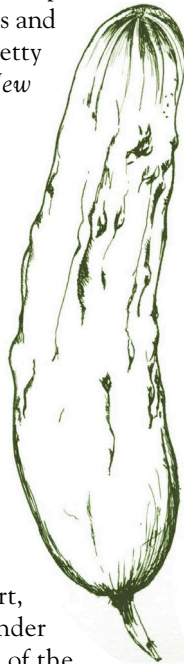
## Chilled Cucumber-Mint Soup with Yogurt or Sour Cream

Everything about this dish is summery and fresh—including the cook, who hasn't had to hover over a steamy stovetop to achieve this surprisingly intense blend of flavors. A shareholder recipe-tester says the sour cream gives this soup lovely richness and suggests using a little finely chopped fresh dill for a pretty garnish. *Angelic Organics Kitchen* (adapted from *The New Moosewood Cookbook*).

Serves 4 to 6

- 4 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped (about 4 cups)
- 1 to 2 cups water
- 2 cups plain yogurt (or 1 cup plain yogurt combined with 1 cup sour cream)
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed
- several fresh mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 to 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 scallions, finely chopped (about 1/3 cup)

1. Combine the chopped cucumber, 1 cup water, yogurt, garlic, mint, dill, honey, and 1 teaspoon salt in a blender or food processor. Purée the ingredients, adding more of the water until the soup is a consistency you like. Season with more salt to taste.
2. Transfer the soup to a large bowl and chill for several hours. Garnish each serving with chopped scallions.



## HANDLING

You can do a lot of fancy things to the skin of a cucumber, and when it is young, fresh, and unwaxed, it really only needs to be thoroughly washed. However, if the skin seems tough or bitter you can remove it; if the seeds are bulky, slice the cucumber lengthwise and scoop them out.

## Marinated Cucumber Salad with Dill

This delicious salad from Denmark has no sauce, no oil, no dressing—yet each delicate slice of cucumber is bursting with tangy-sweet juiciness. You can use the slices as you would any sweet pickles—in an egg salad sandwich or layered on a veggie burger, and of course, this dish is great with hotdogs. For a unique twist, replace dill with the feathery leaves of fennel. *Angelic Organics Kitchen*.

Serves 6 to 8

- 3 large cucumbers (about 2 pounds), peeled, very thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon coarse sea salt or kosher salt
- 2/3 cup white or apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill or 1 tablespoon dried dill

1. In a large bowl, use your hands to thoroughly but gently mix the cucumbers and salt.
2. Place a plate on top of the cucumbers, then place a 2- or 3-pound weight (such as a large can of vegetables) on the plate to weigh it down (this helps release the salt). Set the cucumbers aside to marinate at room temperature for several hours or in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Drain the cucumbers thoroughly in a colander and pat them dry on a clean dish towel. Rinse and dry the bowl, then return the cucumbers to the bowl.
4. Mix the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and pepper in a small pot over medium heat and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring often, until the sugar is dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Pour the hot vinegar mixture over the cucumber slices. Sprinkle with the dill and mix to combine.
6. Chill for at least 3 hours. Drain and serve.

### Overheard

My new jar of pickles fell to the ground and shattered, sending glass shards and baby cucumberettes all around my feet.

Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at [www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook](http://www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook).

