



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

CUCUMBERS



Cucumbers are a tropical vegetable that grow on a creeping vine or bush. They belong to the Cucurbitaceae family. Cucumbers are native to the Himalayan region of India and from there moved through Asia to Europe and were introduced to North America by explorers in the late 1500s. Cucumbers have a mildly sweet, fresh flavor. They are eaten fresh, juiced, grilled, fried, or pickled as is or in drinks, salads, salad dressings, sandwiches, smoothies, and hot and cold soups. Michigan cucumbers are harvested from July through September and are available year-round in their processed form as pickles.



CUCUMBERS ARE

- Cucumbers are a good source of vitamin K. Vitamin K is vital for blood clotting and healthy bones.

MICHIGAN MADE

Michigan farmers grow cucumbers for the fresh market and for processing. Michigan ranks first in the nation for pickling cucumbers growing over 237,000 tons a year, and third in the nation for fresh market cucumbers, growing over 35,000 tons a year. The majority of cucumbers are grown in the Great Lakes Bay Region and West Michigan in Allegan, Bay, Berrien, Cass, Macomb, Monroe, Newaygo, and Van Buren Counties.



FUN FACTS

- Cucumbers are 95% water.
- Cucumbers can be green, yellow, orange, red, purple, brown, white, or multiple colors.
- The flavor of the cucumber comes from the seed.
- Slicing cucumbers are the most common and also called “garden cucumbers.”
- English cucumbers are the longest cucumber and have a thick, dark green skin.
- Pickling cucumbers have a bumpy, thin skin which helps them absorb pickling brine.
- Persian cucumbers are also called baby cucumbers. They are sweet, small, and almost seedless.
- Lemon cucumbers are yellow, mild flavored and shaped like lemons.
- Michigan is known as the center of the “pickleverse” because it is the #1 state for producing cucumbers for pickles.

BUYING AND STORING

- Select firm, bright medium to dark green cucumbers with no blemishes or soft spots.
- Store cucumbers in refrigerator an airtight container or wrap individually in plastic wrap or paper towel for up to five days.
- Wash cucumbers before eating.

MORE THAN FRESH

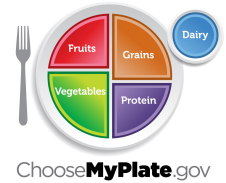
In addition to fresh, cucumbers are available as juice or processed as pickles, relish, and other condiments. When buying packaged or processed cucumbers or pickles, be sure to read labels and choose items that are reduced or low-sodium (salt), or no salt added, low in saturated fat, with no added sugar, unsweetened, and 100% juice.



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EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Cucumbers are part of the Vegetable Group. Most people need 2–3 cups of vegetables per day. For more information visit: myplate.gov.



IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

CUCUMBER SALAD WITH ROASTED PEANUTS

Time: 15–20 minutes | Makes: 6 servings | Serving Size: About ½ cup

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 60, Carbohydrate 6g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Protein 2g, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 4mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



INGREDIENTS

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|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 2 cucumbers, seeded and sliced | 1 tablespoon vegetable oil |
| ½ red onion, thinly sliced | ½ teaspoon ground cumin or |
| 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice, about 1 lime | 1 teaspoon cumin seed |
| ⅓ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional) | 2 tablespoons dry roasted peanuts, chopped |
| | 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped (optional) |

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, heat oil, add ground cumin or cumin seeds and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
2. Add chopped peanuts and continue to cook until oil just begins to bubble.
3. Remove from heat and let cool.
4. Combine cucumbers, onions, lime juice, and red pepper flakes (optional) in large bowl.
5. Add cooled peanuts, cilantro (optional), and mix to combine.
6. Serve immediately or may be refrigerated overnight.

TRY THIS

- Add cucumbers to dressings, sandwiches, wraps, smoothies, soups, and salads.
- Mix fresh sliced cucumbers with cubed watermelon, feta, and mint leaves for a refreshing salad.
- Make marinated cucumbers with 2 large cucumbers, 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar, 1 tablespoon sugar, ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes and a pinch of salt. Toss, chill, and serve.
- Place 1 thinly sliced cucumber in a pitcher of water, let chill for 2 hours, and serve, or will keep up to 2 days.

CHANGE IT UP

- Add 1 tablespoon chopped garlic or chili garlic sauce in Step 2.
- Add sliced green onions and fresh sliced red bell peppers in Step 4.
- Add 1 tablespoon peanut butter in Step 2 for added flavor.