

## PLANT \* GROW

- \* Cucumbers prefer a sunny location with well-drained, fertile soil.
- \* Cucumber varieties include pickling and slicing, vining and bush. "Burpless" varieties do not produce gas that affects some people.
- \* Propagate outside with transplants or by seed when soil temperature reaches 65°F. Cucumbers are very sensitive to cold and can not be planted outside too early.
- \* Plant seeds 1" deep in hills with 3-6 seeds per hill or plant 2-6" apart in rows that are 5-6' apart.
- \* When plants are 2-3" tall, thin plants so they are 2-3 per hill or one plant every 8-15" if planted in a row.
- \* To save space, train vining varieties to grow vertically up a trellis.
- \* Water plants regularly. Dry soil may develop bitter tasting cucumbers.
- \* Use row covers to help prevent insect problems. Remove row covers when plants flower to allow pollination by insects.
- \* Mulching around plants helps retain moisture and suppresses weeds.
- \* Harvest mature cucumbers before frost.

### **Cornell University Home Garden Websites:**

#### **General gardening:**

<http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/>

#### **Cucumber specific:**

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenef65b.html>

## PURCHASE

- \* Cucumbers are available in New York State farmers' markets starting in July.
- \* Select firm, well shaped cucumbers with dark green color that are heavy for size. If they have shriveled tips or are at all withered, they are past their peak freshness.



## ENJOY YOUR CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers are low in calories, fat free, and sodium free.

**Tabouli:** Bulgur, tomatoes, cucumber and parsley combine nicely with a spicy lemon dressing in this delicious Middle Eastern salad.

**Cucumber Wrap:** Add chopped cucumber to cooked ground beef and chopped tomatoes. Add favorite dressing, if desired. Wrap in a tortilla for a delicious lunch.

**Cucumber Appetizer:** Top a slice of party rye or pumpernickel bread with a smear of light mayo, a fat slice of cucumber and a sprinkle of lemon pepper for a delicious appetizer.

**Cucumber Salad:** Mix chopped cucumbers, tomatoes, onions and avocado for a delicious, chunky salad.

### **Websites for Healthy Eating:**

**USDA:** [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

**Cornell University Food & Nutrition Education in Communities (FNEC):** <https://fnec.cornell.edu/>

## PREPARE

- \* Wash cucumbers prior to eating. Some varieties have waxy skins which can be removed by washing with baking soda or by peeling. Peeling skin also removes the bitter taste of some varieties.
- \* Cucumbers do not have to be eaten cold. They also can be baked, boiled, braised, sautéed, pickled or steamed.

## PRESERVE

- \* Refrigerate cucumbers in a plastic bag in the crisper for up to 1 week. Once cut, the open surface should be covered with plastic wrap.
- \* Cucumbers do not freeze well.
- \* Certain varieties work best for pickling (e.g. gherkin), however, any kind can be pickled.

### **Food Preservation Websites:**

#### **National Center for Home Food**

**Preservation:** [www.homefoodpreservation.com](http://www.homefoodpreservation.com)

#### **CCE Herkimer County Food Preservation**

**Resources:** <http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/food-preservation-resources/>

## RECYCLE \* COMPOST

- \* Disease free cucumber scraps provide a rich nitrogen source, nutrients and moisture to your compost.
- \* Vegetable scraps are the "green" additions to your compost.

### **Composting Resources:**

#### **Cornell Waste Management Institute:**

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm>

#### **Composting at Home publication:**

<http://cwmi.ccs.cornell.edu/smallscale.htm>

## Tzatziki

- 1 cup grated, peeled English cucumber (about 1 medium)
- 1 cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh mint
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Squeeze cucumber dry in a clean kitchen towel. Combine cucumber and remaining ingredients in a small bowl; cover and chill one hour. Serve immediately with toasted pita wedges.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 2 Tablespoons (15 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 grams fiber, 15 mg sodium)*

## Freezer Pickles

Wash and slice very thin:

- 7 medium cucumbers
- 1 onions
- 1 pepper

Make a syrup of the following by heating until sugar is dissolved:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon celery seed

Pour syrup over vegetables and let stand 2 hours in refrigerator. Stir often. Pack into freezer containers, leaving 1-inch headspace. Cover and freeze for up to 6 weeks.

Thaw before serving.

## Cucumber Radish Salsa

- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 1 (6-ounce) package radishes, grated
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
- Garnish: whole radish

Stir together all ingredients except radish garnish. Cover and chill before serving.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (20 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 15 mg sodium)*



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### HerKimer County Farmers' Markets

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/local-farmers-markets/>



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**Creating Healthy Places**

# Cucumbers



**HerKimer County Produce Cycle**