

# Cucumbers



## Selecting

The two main cucumber types are the 'slicing' and the 'pickling' varieties.

The slicing variety can be field- or hothouse-grown. Field-grown cucumbers are 6 to 9 inches long (15 cm to 22.5 cm) and have glossy dark green skin.

Pickling cucumbers or 'picklers', as they are commonly known, tend to be shorter, thicker, less regularly shaped than the slicing variety, and have bumpy skin with tiny white or black-dotted spines.

When buying any cucumbers, look for one that is firm and has no soft or moldy spots. The colouring should be green except for the

creamy yellow picklers. Small and slender cucumbers are usually tenderer.

## Storing

Store field-grown cucumbers in a plastic bag. Store hothouse cucumbers in their plastic wrapping, or in a plastic bag if they don't come wrapped. Store both types in the refrigerator crisper. An uncut cucumber lasts for about a week but once cut its shelf life is greatly reduced.

## Preparing

Wash the cucumber and then decide if you want to peel it. If the skin is waxed it is usually best

to peel it. The non-waxed skin of the hothouse cucumbers is very easy to digest and so can be left on.

You can slice, dice, julienne or grate a cucumber. It is a great vegetable to prepare with a mandoline or a spiralizer to make cucumber noodles.

## Eating

Raw cucumber slices make a good addition to salads and are a refreshing garnish in sandwiches. Sliced thin or thick, in wedges or circles, cucumbers make an excellent vegetable to use with your favourite dip. Or use cucumbers to make your favourite tzatziki or raita. They can

also be added to stir-fry, but should be cooked at a low heat. And they can be poached, but again must be heated gently.

## Seasonality

Field-grown cucumbers, including both slicing and pickling varieties are available from June to October, though the availability may vary slightly depending where you live in Canada. Hothouse cucumbers are available year-round.

## Nutrition

Four slices of cucumber (about an ounce or 28g) contains 3 calories. Many of the nutrients and phytochemicals are found in the skin.



This mango cucumber soup is refreshing and light for a hot summer day.

[www.halfyourplate.ca/recipe/mango-cucumber-soup/](http://www.halfyourplate.ca/recipe/mango-cucumber-soup/)

