



# Cucumbers



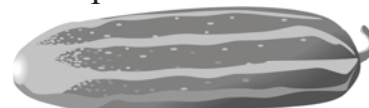
**Fun Facts:** Cucumbers are 96% water. The inside of a growing cucumber on a hot summer day is 20 degrees cooler than the outside air temperature. This fact gave rise to the expression "cool as a cucumber." European explorers to the New World brought cucumbers with them.

**Selecting Fresh Cucumbers:** Choose firm, crisp cucumbers with a slender shape and a dark green rind. (Shiny cucumbers have been coated with an edible wax to protect them from moisture loss.) Avoid cucumbers that have grown too long or too big around, or that have turned yellow, are shriveled at the ends, are tough with large woody seeds, or that have soft spots or feel slimy. Slicing cucumbers and pickling cucumbers are the most common types. Look for slicing cucumbers that are 6 to 8 inches long, or "burp-less" types that are 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter and up to 10 inches long. To make pickles, slicing cucumbers may be used instead of the pickling type. However, pickling cucumbers make better pickles because the skin is less bitter and they have smaller and fewer seeds. For non-dill pickles, look for cucumbers no more than 2 inches long. Choose 4 to 6 inch long cucumbers for dill pickles.

## Measuring Fresh Cucumbers

1 pound = 2 or 3 large cucumbers = about 3 cups diced

1/2 cup sliced = about 8 to 10 slices = about 2 ounces by weight = about 55-60 grams



**Handling and Preserving:** To use for slicing, refrigerate unwashed cucumbers for up to 2 weeks in a loose or perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer. For the highest quality pickles, use cucumbers picked within 24 hours and cooled in ice water or refrigerated immediately. Use pickling salt as directed by the recipe, since table salt may make the brine cloudy and the pickles be off-color.

**Preparation and Serving:** Rinse cucumbers under cold running water to remove dirt. Cut off ends. Peel skin and remove seeds if desired, depending on your taste preference. Add raw cucumbers to vegetable, pasta or potato salads, or slice onto sandwiches for flavor, crunch, color, and very few calories. Use as directed in a recipe.

**Nutrition Facts** for one serving, or 1/2 cup sliced raw cucumbers, peeled or not peeled: Calories about 7; Protein less than 1 gram; Carbohydrates about 1 gram; Fat 0 grams. Cucumbers contribute small amounts of nutrients, such as vitamin C, to the diet.

**References:** [www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mfl184.pdf](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mfl184.pdf); [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu); Food for Fifty, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall; ESHA Food Processor; [www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/mf661.pdf](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/mf661.pdf); [www.aboutproduce.com](http://www.aboutproduce.com)