



CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers are a member of the same family as melons and squashes. We are most familiar with the long, dark green, smooth skinned garden variety, but they can be found in different shapes and colors. Even though we think of cucumbers as vegetables, they are actually fruits. Some cucumbers are sold as “slicing” cucumbers and others as “pickling”. The difference between the two is easiest to tell in the thickness of the skin. Slicing cucumbers have a thicker skin and are often waxed before selling. Unless they are organic cucumbers (which use only non-synthetic waxes) it is recommended you remove the skin before eating. The pickling cucumbers have a thinner skin which aids in absorption of the pickling juices. Whether or not you remove the seeds is a personal preference. The seeds are an unusually rich source of nutrients.

Cucumbers provide us with a variety of health-supportive phytonutrients. Included among these phytonutrients are flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin, uercetin, and kaempferol), lignans (pinoresinol, lariciresinol, and secoisolariciresinol), and triterpenes (cucurbitacins A, B, C, and D). Cucumbers are an excellent source of anti-inflammatory vitamin K. They are also a very good source of the enzyme-cofactor molybdenum; a good source of free radical-scavenging vitamin C; heart-healthy potassium and magnesium, bone-building manganese, and energy-producing vitamin B5. They also contain the important nail health-promoting mineral silica.

From www.whfoods.org

Nina’s Cucumber Salad (from allrecipes.com)

1/2cup reduced-fat sour cream	2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill	3 cucumbers, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
½ cup thinly sliced red onion	salt and pepper to taste

Mix sour cream, lemon juice and dill together in a bowl. Add cucumbers and onion: stir to combine. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.