

Cucumbers

"He had been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put into vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in raw, inclement summers." --
Jonathan Swift, from "Gulliver's Travels"

Wax on Produce

Enjoy the unwaxed cucumbers in your vegetable shares! Many of the cucumbers you purchase in the supermarket have been given a waxy coating to prolong their shelf life.

Over 20 varieties of fruits and vegetables, including cucumbers, apples, cantaloupes, eggplants, oranges, peaches, persimmons, squash, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes are waxed before they reach the supermarket. Waxing reduces the loss of moisture and keeps produce from shriveling.

Waxes made in the United States are either vegetable based, petroleum based, or bug based. Although all these waxes have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration, there are reasons for concern.

The FDA also allows produce distributors to mix these waxes with pesticides, called fungicides, to help prevent decay. According to a report by the Environmental Working Group, cucumbers are one of the top 12 most pesticide-laden produce items. So if you eat the skin of a grocery store cucumber, you might be eating the fungicides trapped in the wax as well!

Another reason for concern is that some produce may be coated with a product containing beef tallow, which strict vegetarians, Orthodox Jews, practicing Moslems, and Seventh-Day Adventists want to avoid. Although the major U.S. manufacturers have agreed not to produce them, such waxes might be applied to the produce that we import from other countries. Imports constitute a fair portion of the fruits and vegetables we eat.

In addition, consumers should select unwaxed cucumbers for pickling, because pickling solutions might not be able to penetrate the wax.

-- Adapted from www.OpenHarvest.com; www.ConciousChoice.com; South Carolina Clemson University educational materials; and cooking tips from [Paulette Mitchell](#), cookbook author.

Summer Skin and Cucumber

Sunburned or not, your skin will appreciate the cooling effects of aloe vera. Scrape out the gel inside an aloe leaf or buy a lotion with aloe as a primary ingredient. You can also soothe sunburn with cool black tea (the tannins in black tea are what do the trick). Witch hazel, cucumber and rose water are all good after sun exposure. from www.DrWeil.com

Cucumber Raita, from www.DrWeil.com

2 large cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon salt
2 cups plain, nonfat yogurt
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
Black pepper to taste

Mix the cucumbers, onion, and salt in a bowl. Let stand for 1/2 hour. Drain off liquid, rinse well with cold water, and drain; then soak in cold water to remove as much salt as desired. Drain well. Add the yogurt,

cumin, and pepper. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving. This traditional Indian side dish or sauce is cool and delightful especially with spicy curries.

Tabouli

1 heaping cup bulgar wheat
1 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves
1 cup cold water
1 cup coarsely chopped parsley
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup finely diced red onion
2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 ripe plum tomatoes
1 large cucumber
Fresh mint leaves

Combine bulgar, water, lemon juice and 1/3 cup olive oil. Mix well. Set aside for at least an hour; overnight is best. The lemon juice helps 'cook' the bulgar.

Add mint, parsley, onion, garlic, pepper, salt, and remaining 1/3 cup olive oil. Add chopped tomatoes and cucumber. Set aside for 30 minutes more. Garnish with mint leaves before serving.

Cucumber Sandwiches for an English Afternoon Tea Party

1 thin cucumber
1 loaf brown bread, sliced
1 stick sweet butter
salt and pepper to taste

Peel cucumber and slice in paper-thin rounds. Salt rounds lightly and place in colander for 15 minutes to drain. Press to release water; pat dry with paper towels.

Spread sliced bread with softened sweet butter. Put 2 layers of cucumber slices on bottom slice, salt and pepper to taste, and top with another buttered slice. Press lightly with palm of hand. Cut all crusts off with a sharp knife. Cut sandwiches in half diagonally.

Source: http://www.lpl.arizona.edu/~bcohen/cucumbers/recipes/english_sand.html

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