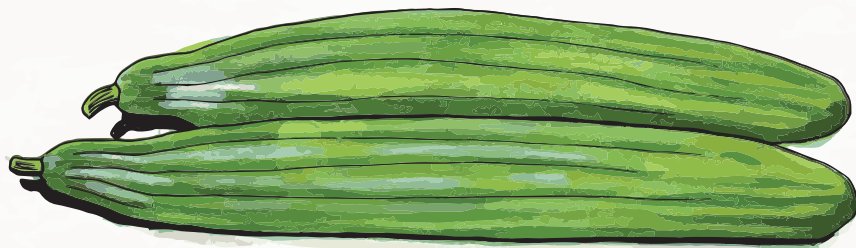


CUCUMBERS



Our featured Nebraska Harvest of the Month item is the cucumber! This viney, climbing garden vegetable is a true summer treat. In Nebraska it is most commonly found in the hottest months - June, July, August, and September. Crunchy and cooling, it is the perfect remedy for a hot day.

SELECTION, STORAGE & COOKING

- Cucumbers should be green and firm with no signs of yellowing.
- Medium-sized (6-9") cucumbers are preferable. Oversized cucumbers may taste bitter or bland and have harder seeds.
- Store unwashed cucumbers in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week.
- Wash before eating.
- No need to peel - most vitamins, minerals and nutrients are found in the skin.
- Cucumbers can be cooked, but most often they are eaten raw or pickled.
- Sliced cucumbers are great dipped in hummus or other spreads - try them as an alternative to chips or crackers.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Cucumbers are cooling and hydrating. They also contain vitamin K which helps the body heal wounds and keep bones healthy.

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY



EVERYTHING BAGEL CUCUMBER BITES

Everything Bagel Seasoning Ingredients:

(use store-bought or homemade recipe below)

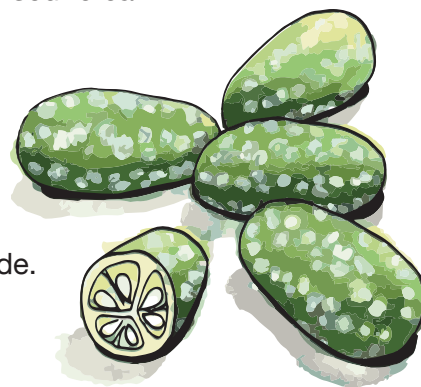
- 1 tsp poppy seeds
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp dried minced garlic
- 1 tsp dried minced onion
- ½ tsp. crushed caraway seeds
- ½ tsp coarse salt (optional)

Directions:

1. If making your own seasoning, combine all seasoning ingredients and set aside.
2. Slice the cucumber crosswise into ¼ inch thick slices and place on a platter.
3. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese, and yogurt/sour cream until well combined and smooth.
4. Use a knife to spread mixture on top of each cucumber slice. Or, attach a star shaped tip to a piping bag and fill the bag with the cream cheese mixture. Pipe decoratively on top of the cucumber slices.
5. Sprinkle each slice with everything bagel seasoning and serve.

Cucumber Bites Ingredients

- 1 medium cucumber
- 4 oz cream cheese, softened
- 3 Tbsp greek yogurt or sour cream



LEARN MORE ABOUT NEBRASKA HARVEST OF THE MONTH
www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month

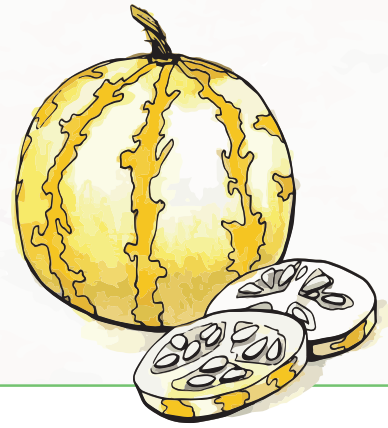


COOL AS A CUCUMBER ACTIVITY

Cucumbers help us stay hydrated and replenish our body's vitamins and minerals when we sweat on a hot day. On a summer day we can take a break in the shade and cool out with a cucumber. Try slicing cucumbers thinly and add them to a pitcher of water. Refrigerate for about two hours, then pour a tall glass of cucumber infused water and sip it.

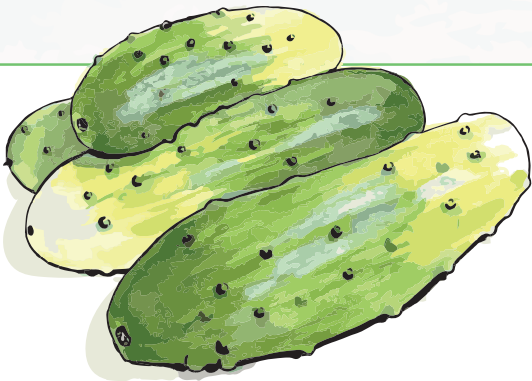
What does it taste like? Do you feel refreshed? What other fruits, vegetables or herbs would taste good in water?

While you are resting in the shade, take a couple cucumber slices and place them on your eyes. It's easiest to keep the slices on your eyes if you are laying down. This can cool and relax your eyes when they are tired, itchy, or sore.



DID YOU KNOW?

The phrase, “cool as a cucumber”, describes a person who can stay calm in a difficult situation, just like the inside of cucumbers stay cool even when the air around them is very hot.



KID FRIENDLY QUICK PICKLE ACTIVITY

Ingredients:

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vinegar (any type)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water
- 1 tsp salt
- 2-4 tsp sugar
- 1-2 Tbsp seasonings (see Notes)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cucumber slices

Directions:

1. In a small saucepan, heat the vinegar, water, salt, and sugar until the mixture simmers. Stir until the salt and sugar are dissolved and remove from heat.
2. Place the desired seasoning (see notes below for ideas) in the bottom of a clean pint-sized glass jar. Add the cucumber slices, packing them closely together. Leave about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch space at the top of the jar.
3. Fill the jar with the warm vinegar mixture to cover the cucumbers. Close the jar with a clean lid and refrigerate for 1 to 3 days to allow flavors to develop.
4. Store pickles in the refrigerator. Use within 3 months.

Notes:

- Ideas for **fresh seasonings**: basil, cilantro, dill, garlic, ginger, hot pepper, onion, oregano, or thyme.
- Ideas for **dry seasonings**: bay leaf, celery, cumin or dill seed, dried chili, peppercorn, pickling spice, or tumeric.