





Cool Cucumber

The healthful benefits and calming properties in cucumber make this salad accompaniment a perfect fit for the spa.

Soothe, relax and refresh everything from the palate to the skin by adding this naturally hydrating ingredient to your spa menu.

Facts

Although native to India, cucumber has been a popular ingredient throughout the world, having been widely cultivated for more than 3,000 years. Consisting mostly of water—more than 90%—cucumber has a unique moist taste. A great source of vitamins C and K, as well as potassium, the cucumber also is high in dietary fiber and low in calories—about four per ounce. The flesh contains ascorbic acid and caffeic acid—both of which help to ease skin irritations and reduce swelling, while the hard skin is rich in fiber and minerals, such as silica and magnesium. Varieties range in size from 3–20 inches, differ in color from green to white, and may be either smooth or ridged.

In the kitchen

This common salad staple frequently is added for its crisp, crunchy texture. The Peninsula Beverly Hills in Beverly Hills, California, features a Chilled Cucumber and Enoki Mushroom Salad on its menu. Cucumber also tastes delicious on its own when tossed with a light sesame oil and rice vinegar dressing, such as the Cucumber Sesame Salad served at Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona. The Spa at Grandover in Greensboro, North Carolina, pairs apple and cucumber to create a zesty

Cucumber Apple Slaw. Or, for a garnish, mix up a Crisp Cucumber-avocado Salsa, like the one served at The Pointe Spa at Hawthorn Farm Athletic Club in Hillsboro, Oregon. For a cool and sweet summer treat, dish up the recipe for **Cucumber & Watercress Soup**, courtesy of Chef Don Jakubowski of Kohler Waters Spa at Destination Kohler in Kohler, Wisconsin.

In the spa

The cooling and revitalizing properties of cucumber have been utilized in a number of skin care products. Balance, refresh and restore with SkinCeuticals' Revitalizing Toner, or treat inflammation with its Phyto + botanical gel. Relieve tired eyes with June Jacobs' Cooling Cucumber Eye Gel. Keyano Aromatics International Inc. carries a complete Cucumber Body Collection featuring Bath & Shower Gel, Body Polish, Aromatic Mist, and Hand & Body Lotion that is scented subtly with cucumber for refreshingly soothed skin. The skin care company Thai Heritage Spa combines the unique benefits of cucumber with healing aloe vera in its Cucumber & Aloe Vera facial line.

When cucumbers are associated with skin care, the common image is slices placed over the eyes. Because of its high water concentration, cucumber acts as an ideal hydrating ingredient

Quick Facts

- Cucumbers, or *Cucumis sativus*, are available year-round, but are at their peak from May through July.
- This fruit belongs to the same family as pumpkin, zucchini, watermelon and other types of squash, and commonly is mistakenly referred to as a vegetable.
- When selecting cucumbers, check that they are firm and rounded at the edges, and have bright-medium to dark-green skin color. Choose ones that are displayed in refrigerated cases, as they are sensitive to heat.
- Varieties grown to be eaten fresh are called slicers, while those intended for pickling are called picklers.
- The edible fleshy seeds have been known to cause some people to burp. Burpless varieties are available.
- The light green food makes a colorful decorative garnish that adds interesting texture to accompany main dishes.

Cucumber & Watercress Soup

From Chef Don Jakubowski, Garde Manger for Kohler Waters Spa at Destination Kohler in Kohler, Wisconsin

Makes 4 quarts

6 cucumbers, peeled, seeded
and cut into 2-inch quarters
3 tablespoons yogurt
1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped
salt and pepper to taste

Watercress Garnish

3 bunches watercress
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
salt and pepper to taste
water, to thin

1. Purée cucumbers, yogurt and dill until smooth.
2. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Chill for one hour.
3. For watercress garnish: Blanch watercress until bright green in color. Purée and add vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Add water to thin the mixture, if needed.
4. Serve in bowls. Place 1 tablespoon of watercress purée on top of soup, and lightly swirl.

Recipe courtesy of Kohler Waters Spa at Destination Kohler, created by Chef Don Jakubowski.



Photos courtesy of Kohler Co.

in facials. The Cold Stone Cucumber & Green Tea Redness Relief at Spa Fusion & Health Club in San Francisco unites cold stones with green tea and cucumber extracts to help reduce facial redness, irritation and flushing. Olympus Spa in Lynnwood, Washington, includes an application of fresh ground cucumber over the face during its Korean Facial Moisturizing treatment to tone and freshen. Honey and cucumber also make a great combination that both heals and softens, such as the Traditional Honey & Cucumber Facial at Echo Valley Ranch & Spa in Jesmond, British Columbia, Canada, or the Natural Honey and Cucumber Facial from Salus Spa at Lake House in Daylesford, Victoria, Australia.

Cucumber is a wonderful treat for irritation and inflammation, as its inherent moisture is absorbed by dehydrated skin. Casa del Mar in Langkawi, Malaysia, gently soothes sunburned skin with a Cucumber Ice Body Wrap. Phi Phi Island Village Resort & Spa in Thailand applies natural aloe vera gel and cold shredded cucumber in its Sunburn Wrap. Banyan Tree Spa in Bangkok, Thailand, highlights a Lemongrass & Cucumber Rub in its signature therapy, Royal Banyan. Soak tired, worn-out feet in a Cucumber Bath at Jin Soon Natural Hand & Foot Spa in New York.

Heal with cucumber

Stay cool as a cucumber as spring warms into summer, and add a revitalizing crunch to your menu. Feature a fresh cucumber and tomato salad, or use its invigorating properties in a soothing and hydrating facial. Or take a pointer from Indian Springs Spa in Calistoga, California, which serves clients CucumberAde—a mix of cucumber, lemon and mineral water that heals from within. ✂



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