

Cucumber

History

Cucumbers were originally grown in India. They were thought to be poisonous and people would scrape the skin off to let the poison out. Despite this belief, cucumbers spread across Asia.

Cucumbers were also cultivated by ancient Egyptians. They helped travelers cross deserts due to their high water content. After the flesh of the cucumber was consumed, Egyptians would use the intact peel as a canteen. The water would stay much cooler in the cucumber canteen than the outside desert air.

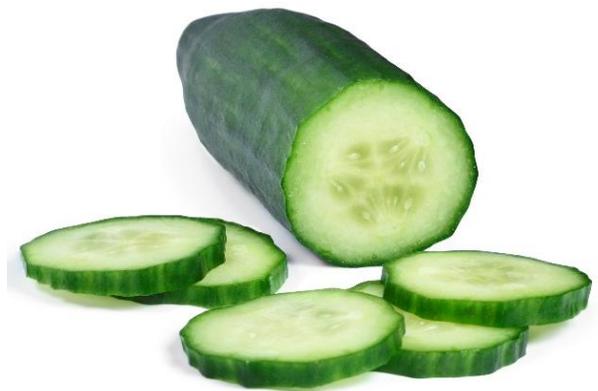
Alexander the Great brought cucumbers to Europe after journeys to Asia. Later, Christopher Columbus brought cucumbers to the Americas. By 1494, cucumbers were being grown in Haiti. After this, cucumbers spread throughout Central and South America. Cucumbers made their way to North America by the mid-16th century, and became popular as settlers brought seeds with them from Europe.

Varieties

Persian Cucumbers are “regular” cucumbers. They have soft, edible seeds and the skin is waxy to seal in moisture.

Gherkin cucumbers are small (only two inches long), dark green, and prickly. They are used to make pickles.

Apple Cucumbers are small round cucumbers that are pale greenish-white in color and grow to be the size of a baseball.



Fun Facts

- Cucumbers are 96 percent water.
- Cucumbers age faster if stored with apples, melon, or tomatoes.
- Cucumbers are actually a fruit.
- A cucumber’s flavor comes from the seed.
- Cucumbers can be 20° cooler on the inside than the outside air.
- Cucumbers are related to watermelon, pumpkins, and squash.
- It takes 10-20 bee visits per flower to produce a cucumber.
- One vine can produce 25-125 cucumbers.



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