

# CUCUMBER

Cucumbers are in a family known as cucurbits that includes melons, squash, pumpkins and gourds. They are classified as either slicers or picklers. Pickling cucumbers have thin, lighter skin than slicers. They can be used for pickling or anything the slicing cucumbers would be used for. Slicing cucumbers are larger with dark green skin. Because they are thicker, they are not usually suitable for pickling because they are picked when they are a larger size.

**To store:** Put cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator for up to a week. Keep them far away from tomatoes, apples, and citrus which accelerate their deterioration.

**Handling:** Slicing cucumbers are often peeled. Picking ones are not. If the seeds are bulky, slice the cucumber lengthwise and scoop them out. Scoring the skin of a cucumber with a fork or zester gives it attractive stripes. Slice, dice or cut into chunks according to recipe.

**To use:** Eat cucumbers raw in sandwiches or salads. Try cucumber rounds topped with vegetable, egg, or tuna salad, goat cheese, or simply sprinkle with salt. Use cucumbers in chilled summer soups. Slice up cucumbers and drop into a pitcher of water to make cucumber water. Look up recipes for quick pickles or refrigerator pickles or try your hand at fermenting pickles or canning your own!