



### Ingredient Spotlight: Cucumbers

While there are dozens of cucumber varieties, there are two main types: slicing and pickling (aka pickle ready). Slicing cucumbers are the longer of the two, usually with smooth skin that's uniform in color; shop for unwaxed cukes so you can enjoy their nutritious peels. Pickling cucumbers, like the popular Kirby, are short with bumpy skin and some variety in color. Cucumbers should be firm and free of soft spots.

peel. Cut the cucumbers into chunks for easier puréeing. Halve the pepper and scoop out the seeds and veins and discard them along with the stem.

## Cold Cucumber Soup

A refreshing way to enjoy this summer staple

*Have a surplus of cukes growing in the backyard or a bagful from your farmers' market? This soup is a delicious way to enjoy them, and you can garnish it in so many ways.*

- 2-3 large cucumbers, about 2 pounds
- 1 small jalapeño or serrano, halved and seeded
- 2 cups Greek yogurt
- 3 large scallions, trimmed
- 2-3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 cup packed mix of parsley, dill, and chives
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- 1/2 cup water, more as needed

- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar, more to taste
- Coarse sea salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Optional garnishes: goat cheese, crème fraîche, diced onion, diced cucumber, sauteed shrimp, or pine nuts

- **Halve the cucumbers** lengthwise and use a large spoon to scoop out and discard most of the seeds; leave on the

- **Working in batches**, add the cucumbers, pepper, yogurt, scallions, garlic, herbs, olive oil, and water to a blender and process until puréed. The mixture should be on the thick side, but if it is too thick, use additional water, 2 tablespoons at a time. Transfer each batch to a large bowl. Stir in the sherry vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill in the fridge for about an hour.

- **To serve**, ladle portions into soup bowls or glasses, top with your choice of garnishes, and drizzle with more olive oil. *Yields 6 servings*