

60-Minute Gourmet



Hot and spicy cucumber salad

2 large cucumbers

1½ tsp salt

3 tbsp soy sauce

½ tsp monosodium glutamate

½ tsp crushed dried red
pepper, or ¼ tsp cayenne

1 tsp sesame oil

1 tsp vinegar

1. Rinse the cucumbers and pat dry. Pound the cucumbers all over lightly with the flat side of a cleaver. Trim off the ends of the cucumbers. Peel the cucumbers and cut them lengthwise into quarters. Scrape out the seeds and discard.
2. Cut each cucumber strip into 1½-in. lengths. Trim the corners of each piece to make them neater.
3. Put the pieces of cucumber in a bowl and add 1 tsp salt. Let stand 10 minutes.
4. Drain the cucumbers well. Add the remaining ingredients, including the rest of the salt, and toss well to blend. Chill briefly before serving. **4 servings.**

VARIATIONS:

Cucumber and yogurt salad (*Angourosalata me yiaourti*)

Line a bowl with cheesecloth and empty 3 cups plain yogurt into it. Bring the edges of the cheesecloth together and tie to make a bag. Suspend the bag over the bowl and let drain for 45 minutes or longer. The yogurt will become thick like sour cream. Empty the yogurt into a clean bowl and add 1 cup peeled, seeded and diced cucumber, 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely minced, 1 tbsp chopped fresh dill, ¼ cup olive oil, 2 tsp wine vinegar, and salt to taste. Blend thoroughly. Chill briefly before serving. **4-6 servings.**

Cucumber and carrot salad with parsley (*Salade de concombres et carottes*):

Trim the ends off 1 1-lb cucumber. Cut the cucumber into ½-in. cubes. There should be about 3 cups. Put the cucumber in a mixing bowl. Peel 2 carrots (about ¼ lb total weight) and grate them on the medium blade of a grater. There should be about 1 cup. Add to the cucumber. Add ½ cup finely chopped scallions, ¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley, 1 tbsp sugar, 3 tbsp white wine vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Toss to blend. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled.