

Sticky Fingers Cooking®

Charred Cucumber Corn Salad

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 25 / **Cook Time** 5 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

toss: to lightly lift and drop food items together or coat food items with flour, or a sauce or dressing, as in a salad.

Equipment

- Skillet
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Can opener
- Grater
- Small bowl
- Whisk
- Citrus juicer (optional)

Ingredients

Charred Cucumber Corn Salad

- 1 garlic clove
- 1 small cucumber
- 2 C corn (frozen + thawed or fresh off the cob)
- 1/2 C canned black beans
- 1 T fresh mint and/or cilantro leaves
- 1/4 C grated queso blanco (or queso fresco/Monterey jack/Parmesan cheese) **** (Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese)****
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 T honey/sugar
- 1 T apple cider vinegar (or white/red wine vinegar)
- 1 lime

Food Allergen Substitutions

Charred Cucumber Corn Salad

Dairy: Omit cheese or substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese.

Instructions

Charred Cucumber Corn Salad

chop + grate

Have kids chop up **1 garlic clove** and **1 cucumber**. Then, measure **2 cups corn** and **1/2 cup black beans**. Tear up **1 tablespoon of mint or cilantro leaves**. Have kids grate **1/4 cup queso blanco**, and set it to the side.

add + sauté

Add the chopped garlic to a preheated, medium-heat skillet with a little oil to sauté. Then immediately and carefully add the corn. Cook the corn just until char marks are visible, about 3 to 5 minutes.

measure + whisk + squeeze

While the corn and garlic cook, measure and whisk the dressing ingredients in a small bowl: **{1/2 teaspoon paprika, 2 teaspoons salt, 2 tablespoons oil, 1 tablespoon honey, and 1 tablespoon vinegar}**. Squeeze in the juice of **1 lime**. Add the hot corn and garlic to the dressing, whisk well, and set to the side to cool.

toss + serve

After the salad has cooled, add the pre-measured beans, grated cheese, chopped cucumbers, and the torn mint or cilantro leaves. Toss everything well. Serve on the side with the flatbread.

Featured Ingredient: Cucumber!

Hi! I'm Cucumber!

"I'm as cool as a cucumber. Actually, I am a cucumber! I have a thick, dark green peel; I am longer than I am wide; and I am a fruit that's often used as a veggie! There are three types of cucumbers: slicing, pickling, and burpless. The slicing and burpless varieties, with or without their peels, are tasty and refreshing sliced, chopped, or minced in salads, sandwiches, salsa, sauces, appetizers, and smoothies or other drinks. The pickling cucumber eventually becomes a pickle (after its pickling spa treatment)!"

History & Etymology

Cucumbers are one of the oldest known cultivated vegetables. They have been grown for at least 3,000 years and are believed to have originated in India.

The early Greeks or Romans may have introduced cucumbers to Europe. Records indicate that the French cultivated them in the 9th century and the English in the 14th century. Then Spanish explorers brought cucumbers to the Americas in the 16th century.

Pickled cucumbers, or pickles, may have been produced first by workers building the Great Wall of China or by people in Mesopotamia's Tigris Valley.

A 1630 book called "New England's Plantation" by Francis Higginson, describing plants grown in a garden on Conant's Island in Boston Harbor, mentions "cowcumbers." The cucumber may have been dubbed cowcumber due to thinking at that time that uncooked vegetables were fit only for cows.

The word "cucumber" comes from late Middle English, from the Old French "cocombre," from the Latin "cucumis."

Anatomy

The cucumber is a creeping vine plant that is part of the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family. Other members are melon, squash, pumpkin, and watermelon. Cucumbers grow on a vine, often in sandy soil. Sandy soil

warms faster in the spring, giving cucumbers a more favorable growing environment.

Cucumber length varies. Slicers are 6 to 8 inches, burpless 8 to 10 inches, and picklers are 3 to 5 inches long.

Cucumbers have a mild melon flavor. Slicing cucumbers will have seeds in their flesh, preferably small, soft seeds. Burpless cucumbers are slightly sweeter with a more tender skin and are easier to digest. They may also have no or very few seeds.

"Cool as a cucumber" isn't just a catchy phrase. A cucumber's inner temperature can be 10 to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air. This is because it consists mainly of water, which also applies to watermelons, and it takes more energy to heat the water inside the cucumber than the air around it. No wonder these are such summertime favorites! However, we don't say "as cool as a watermelon," so how did this expression become part of our vocabulary? It may have come from a poem in John Gay's *Poems, New Song on New Similes* from 1732.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Cucumbers are ready to be harvested 50 to 70 days after planting. They are ripe when they are firm and bright or dark green. Slicing cucumbers will be six to eight inches long. Avoid leaving them on the vine too long, or their taste may become bitter and their rind tougher.

At the store, look for firm cucumbers without blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots. Organic cucumbers are the best choice to avoid pesticide residue, if available. In addition, washing them reduces the amount of residue and pathogens.

If you don't eat your fresh, uncut cucumbers immediately, store them in your refrigerator crisper drawer in a plastic bag for up to three days if unwaxed and up to a week if waxed.

You can eat slicing and burpless cucumbers by themselves, slice or chop them into salads, or blend them into sauces and smoothies.

Pickling cucumbers are pickled whole or sliced in brine, sugar, vinegar, and spices. There are several kinds of pickles, such as sweet, bread-and-butter, gherkin, and kosher dill.

Nutrition

Cucumbers are 96 percent water, have very little fat, and are low in calories.

Cucumbers contain small amounts of the vitamins you need every day and 16 percent of the daily value of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting.