

Cucumber and Melon Salad with Mint

by [Lynne Rossetto Kasper](#) and [Sally Swift](#)

Yield 🍴 Serves 2 as a main dish; 4 as a first course or side dish

Time 🕒 10 minutes prep time + 30 minutes rest + 5 minutes assembly prep, 45 minutes total



Photo: Ellen Silverman

Melons and cucumbers are naturals together -- they're practically siblings in the botanical world -- but cooks rarely pair them. Here, they get some Mediterranean attitude with mint and garlic, making them into the coolest possible essence of summer-in-a-bowl.

Partner this salad with anything pulled from the grill, or have it as a light lunch on a bed of tender greens. Obviously, the better the melon, the better the salad, but don't be afraid to sweeten not-so-perfect melon with a sprinkle of sugar.

Cook to Cook: Cucumbers have a shifty habit of giving off liquid exactly when you don't want them to. You can beat them at their own game by giving them a 30-minute, salted rest in the fridge before assembling this salad (see below).

- 2 medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 1-1/2 cups)
- Salt
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and halved
- 1-1/2 cups ripe cantaloupe or watermelon, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1/4 tightly-packed cup fresh spearmint leaves, torn
- 1 heaping tablespoon finely snipped chives, or scallion tops
- 1 tablespoon white wine or vinegar, more to taste
- 1 tablespoon good tasting extra-virgin olive oil, or more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of sugar, if needed to sweeten the melon
- 1/4 cup crumbled young sheep cheese such as Ricotta Salata, Cacio di Roma, Pecorino or feta

1. Sprinkle the cucumber with salt, roll up the pieces in a double thickness of paper towel and let rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Unwrap and pat dry.

2. Rub a serving bowl with the garlic. Add the cucumber, melon, mint, chives, vinegar and 1 tablespoon of oil. Gently combine. Season to taste with more oil or vinegar, salt, pepper, and sugar, if needed.

3. Serve topped with crumbled spoonfuls of cheese and eat immediately.

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