

# KIDS CLUB

## NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest issue of our ChopChop Kids Club newsletter! (If you missed the last one, it's [here](#).)

This week we're making Smashed Cucumber Salad (and yes, you get to do the smashing).

How else do you like to eat cucumbers? Do you add them to your sandwiches or your salads?

What about your drinks? ([Cucumber Lemonade](#) is one of our favorite drinks for summer!)

If you think you don't love cucumbers, we hope one of our recipes will change your mind.



# Smashed Cucumber Salad

This is such a fresh and simple salad! And it's fun to whack the cucumbers. Removing a few strips of peel from the cucumber makes it easier to smash—plus, it looks cool. Make sure to keep your fingers out of the way, and go easy. You just want to soften them—not turn them into juice.

■ HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES ■ TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES ■ MAKES: 3 CUPS

## KITCHEN GEAR

Cutting board  
Sharp knife (adult needed)  
Peeler  
Measuring spoons  
Plastic bag  
Small frying pan or rolling pin  
Small mixing bowl  
Flexible spatula or spoon

## INGREDIENTS

1 English cucumber (the kind wrapped in plastic), washed, trimmed, and partially peeled  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon white or rice vinegar

## INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on the counter.

1. Put the cucumber in the plastic bag and put the bag on the cutting board.
2. Gently hit the plastic-bag-covered cucumber with the frying pan or rolling pin until it is smashed.
3. Take the smashed cucumber out of the plastic bag and cut it into 1- to 1½-inch pieces (if they're not already small enough from smashing).
4. Put the cucumber pieces in the bowl, add the salt and vinegar, and stir well. Taste a piece of cucumber. If it needs a pinch more salt or a splash more vinegar, add it and then taste again. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 1 hour.

## GET CREATIVE

- Add 1 small garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped.
- Add 1 tablespoon soy sauce.
- Add 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil.
- Swap in lemon juice for the vinegar.





## DO YOU HAVE MORE CUCUMBERS?

Try one of these recipes.

- **Cucumber Lemonade:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cucumber-lemonade](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cucumber-lemonade)
- **Creamy Cucumber Salad:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/creamy-cucumber-salad-2](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/creamy-cucumber-salad-2)
- **Cucumber Agua Fresca:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cucumber-agua-fresca](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cucumber-agua-fresca)
- **Cold Cucumber and Avocado Soup:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cold-cucumber-and-avocado-soup](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/cold-cucumber-and-avocado-soup)
- **Tangy Tsatsiki:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/tangy-tsatsiki/](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/tangy-tsatsiki/)
- **East African Mango and Cucumber Salad:** [www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/east-african-mango-and-cucumber-salad](http://www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/east-african-mango-and-cucumber-salad)

### ▼ East African Mango and Cucumber Salad



## KITCHEN SKILL

### How to cut a cucumber

Our Smashed Cucumber Salad uses cucumbers that are cut in an unusual way, but for regular use in salads and on sandwiches, this is how we like to cut them.

1. Peel the cucumber and cut it in half lengthwise.
2. If the inside is seedy, use a teaspoon to scrape out the seeds. Throw them away or compost them.
3. Put one cucumber half flat side down on a cutting board. Cut the cucumber lengthwise into strips, then cut the strips crosswise into cubes.
4. Repeat with the other half.



# Make Easy Dill Pickles

Did you know that dill pickles are made from cucumbers? They're incredibly easy to make and it's like a science experiment, too! The main ingredient, besides cucumbers, is patience. This is the time of year to get small pickling cucumbers from farm stands and farmers' markets, but no worries if you can't—just slice up a big cucumber or two and make pickles from that. They'll still be delicious!

••••• HANDB-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES ••••• TOTAL TIME: 2 DAYS ••••• MAKES: 2 QUARTS

## KITCHEN GEAR

Cutting board  
Sharp knife (adult needed)  
Measuring cups  
Measuring spoons  
Medium-sized pot  
Large glass or nonreactive metal bowl  
Small plate

## INGREDIENTS

5 cups water  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup white vinegar  
 2 tablespoons salt  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds small pickling cucumbers or 10–12 mini Persian cucumbers or 2 English cucumbers (the kind wrapped in plastic)  
 3 garlic cloves, peeled  
 4 large fresh dill sprigs



## INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on the counter.

1. To make the brine: Put the water, vinegar, and salt in the pot, put the pot on the stove, and turn the heat to medium-high. When the mixture boils (you'll know it's boiling when you see bubbles breaking all over its surface), turn off the heat and set the pot aside to cool.
2. Wash the cucumbers and trim off the blossom ends (that's the end opposite where it grows on

the stem). If you're using large cucumbers, cut them into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices. If you're using pickling or mini cucumbers, leave them whole.

3. Put the cucumbers, garlic cloves, and dill sprigs in the bowl. Add the cooled brine and stir well.
4. Lay a plate over the top of the cucumbers to keep them submerged in the brine. Put the bowl on a counter where it can sit undisturbed, and leave the cucumbers there for 2 or 3 days, until they are as sour as you like them.
5. Enjoy right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 2 weeks.

## DID YOU KNOW?

These pickles get sour from the added vinegar as well as the natural process of fermentation, during which healthy bacteria convert the cucumber's natural sugar into tart lactic acid.

## USE YOUR SENSES

Taste a cucumber slice at every stage: plain; right when you pour the brine over them; after 1 day; after 2 days. What do you notice?

## WORD FUN: CUTE CUKE EXPRESSIONS

The saying “to be as cool as a cucumber” means that you are calm and relaxed, especially under stress. The saying “in a pickle” means that you’re in a difficult situation. An expression like this is called an “idiom.” In an idiom, the words suggest something different from what they literally mean. Think of or look up other idioms with food words and their meanings. Then try to use them in a conversation!



## MINDFULNESS: SPA DAY

Have you ever seen pictures of people with cucumber slices on their eyelids? Cucumbers are believed to make skin less puffy, which is why they’re often associated with a spa (at least in cartoons). You can create your own spa at home for a relaxing afternoon. Put on a robe and slippers or any comfy clothes and play calming music. Some ideas of how to spend your spa day: Light scented candles (with the help of an adult), paint your toenails, take a bath, do yoga, and drink fancy water (like our [Cucumber-Mint Water](#)). You can also use this quiet time to do relaxing activities like write in your journal or meditate. Ahhhhhhhh.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 95% of a cucumber’s weight is water.
- Cucumbers are part of the melon family.
- According to Guinness World Records, the longest cucumber measured 42.1 inches and was grown in Wales in 2011.



## GET MOVING: PICKLEBALL

Have you ever played pickleball? It’s a serious sport with a silly name that was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island in Washington. Pickleball is played with a paddle that is smaller than a tennis racquet and larger than a ping-pong paddle, and a plastic ball with holes, like a Wiffle ball. The game combines different elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. You probably don’t have a pickleball court at home, but you might be able to [find one in your area](#)—or you can make one on a backyard badminton court with a lowered net (or use a tennis court in your neighborhood). Don’t have the right equipment? Just use a tennis racquet and a Wiffle ball—it won’t be exactly right, but that’s okay! Learn more about the rules and history of pickleball from the [USA Pickleball Association](#).

