

# Introducing Caleb the Cucumber

It's March and that means it's veggiemania time! Welcome to the party Caleb the Cucumber.



Yo' – I'm Caleb, and I'm from the cool cucumber family. You might recognise us as the dark green torpedo-shaped fruit.

## The Cucumber Family

Not all cucumbers are alike. There are about 50 different kinds! Some of us have smooth skins and some of us have bumpy skins! Smooth skinned cucumbers are usually dark green and the bumpy kind are a lighter green-yellow colour.

## Availability

We're available all year around but we're best value from June to September.

## Did you know?

The expression 'cool as a cucumber' was invented because we truly are the coolest vegetable around! We are made up of more than 90% water so we are extremely refreshing to eat!

## The Cool Facts

- We are one of the oldest vegetables around – people have been eating us for 1000s of years in India and parts of Asia.
- Our waxy coat on our skin can actually erase ink – how cool!
- Eating cucumbers can actually get rid of bad breath.
- Our lovely flavour actually comes from our seeds.

## Why are cucumbers so good to eat?

We're cool (obviously) – and really refreshing on a warm day. But we also provide lots of different vitamins and minerals in small amounts which all adds up! We also are a great source of fibre for a healthy digestion.

## How are cucumbers grown?

We grow on long vines that can produce up to 125 cucumbers at once. We grow best in moist soil with plenty of warm sunshine. If the soil is too dry we can become bitter (yuck!). We don't grow well in Ireland as there is too much rain and not enough sunshine for our chilled out lifestyles. It takes almost 3 months for us to grow and then we are usually harvested by hand but cutting us from the vine which leaves us with a short stalk.

## How to store cucumbers

Store us in the refrigerator. Top tip – To keep us fresh and around for longer do not store us alongside fruit as we will yellow and age faster.

## Fun ways to prepare and eat cucumbers

We're most refreshing eaten raw, with our skin on unless it's very tough. You can cut us into sticks or circles to make a great snack or why not sneak us into your sandwich – perfect for your lunchbox.

If you want to get really fancy – score our skin with a fork before cutting.

We can also be steamed, boiled, baked or stir-fried as a vegetable to add to a dinner.

## Best bit -

We're naturally low in protein and can make up a delicious part of your diet – so what are you waiting for give me a try.

How many times did you try it? \_\_\_\_\_.

Did you earn your star? ★



## Recipe

### Cucumber Chips

1. Take a cucumber and slice it thinly. You can leave the skin on.
2. Pat the slices down with a towel.
3. Throw the slices into a bowl with your choice of seasoning.

Examples of spices:

**Onion and Garlic** (Powdered garlic and salt)

**Salt and Vinegar Chips** (Salt and Apple cider vinegar)

**Smoked cucumber chips** (Smoked paprika, salt and garlic powder)

**Lemon pepper** (Freshly squeezed lemon juice and ground black pepper)

*Bake for about 2-3 hours on a low heat to dry out.*

And there you have it some delicious chips naturally low in protein – YUM!

**It's important to stay safe - always ask a parent for help when chopping and using the oven.**