

Peel the cucumbers. Cut 18 to 24 paper thin slices and reserve as a garnish. Cut the rest into half-inch chunks; you will have about 4-1/2 cups.

Cook the leeks or onions slowly in the butter, covered, for about 15 minutes until tender but not browned, stirring often. Add the flour and cook, stirring for several minutes. Gradually beat in the broth, bring to a boil, and simmer 10 minutes.

Add the cucumber chunks, vinegar, and dried dill. Bring to the boil, then simmer, partially covered, for 20 to 25 minutes. Puree, then return to the soup pan. Season with salt and white pepper. Thin out with more liquid if necessary.

To serve hot, bring back to the simmer, whisk in 1/2 cup of the sour cream and serve each bowl topped with a dollop of sour cream, cucumber slices and herbs.

To serve cold, whisk the 1/2 cup sour cream into the pureed soup and overseason a bit. Chill overnight. Serve with remaining cream, cucumber slices and fresh dill.

(Note: Julia's original recipe calls for 4 Tbs. of farina (cream of wheat or semolina) instead of flour. No cooking a roux—just add it to the sauteed onion along with the stock and cucumbers. It's easy, but I prefer the smoother texture of the roux.)



IBO COOKS: CUCUMBERS

CUCUMBER CANAPÉS

Amanda Aiton

4 cucumbers, sliced into 1/2 inch thick slices
1 cup bleu cheese or gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
1 cup cream cheese
1/4 cup sliced almonds
1/4 dried cranberries
Honey to drizzle

In a bowl, mix bleu cheese, cream cheese, almonds, and cranberries together

Spoon cheese mixture into cucumber slices and drizzle with honey



CUCUMBER MINT AGUA FRESCA

Elise Bauer

1 lb of cucumbers (about 2 good sized cucumbers), coarsely chopped
1/2 cup fresh lime juice
1 1/4 cup packed mint leaves (about a large handful), woody stems removed
1/2 cup sugar
Approximately 1 1/4 cup of water

Put ingredients in blender, add enough water to fill 3/4 of blender. Purée until smooth.

Strain out solids: Place a fine mesh sieve over a bowl and pour the purée through it, pressing against the sieve with a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon to extract as much liquid out as possible.

Fill a large pitcher halfway with ice cubes. Add the juice. Serve with sprigs of mint and slices of lime.



KACHOOMBAR (INDIAN CHOPPED SALAD)

Andy Aiton

2 cucumbers, medium
1 tomato, diced
1/2 red onion chopped fine
1/2 jalapeño, seeded and diced
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
1/2 tsp cumin
Pinch salt
Pinch pepper
Pinch cayenne
1 lime, juiced

Toss all ingredients together, let set 15 minutes

Serve immediately or hold in refrigeration for up to 4 days

POTAGE AUX CONCOMBRES

Cream of Cucumber Soup

based on a recipe from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking, Volume II*, by Julia Child and Simone Beck.

For 6 to 7 cups, serving 4 to 6

1½ lbs. cucumbers (3, about 8 inches long)
½ cup or more finely chopped leeks and/or onions
3 Tbs. Butter
3 Tbs. all-purpose flour
6 cups chicken broth
1½ tsp. wine vinegar
¾ tsp. dried dill weed (or 1½ tsp. fresh, minced)
Salt and white pepper
1 cup sour cream, or ½ cup each heavy cream and sour cream
Minced fresh dill for garnish