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## COOL AS A CUCUMBER

IT seems to be a good season for cucumbers, so here are some ways of preserving them. Of course they are nicest when eaten raw and freshly pulled—how enticing is even the smell of cut-up cucumber on the luncheon or dinner-table on a hot summer day! Some people like to peel and slice them an hour or so before meal-time, and leave them on a tilted dish, so that the liquid may drain off. Then sprinkle with pepper and a little vinegar. This is supposed to prevent the possibility of indigestion. Another idea is to peel the cucumber, score the sides, and slice finely. Put into a bowl and pour over it a few spoonfuls of cream (or top milk). Leave it all day and eat it for the evening meal, having turned it occasionally with a silver fork. No vinegar! It seems to be the vinegar which spoils the crispness, and so each person should add it individually, and not leave the cucumber soaking in it.

### Cucumber Sauce

This is delightful with cold meat. Peel and grate a cucumber, and add it with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon mustard and 1 tablespoon chopped parsley to 1 cup of good mayonnaise. Serve on slices of cold meat.

### Boiled Cucumber (like marrow)

Cucumbers make a very delicate vegetable if cooked like marrow and served with a good parsley sauce. Delicious with boiled fowl, or any meat. If very young and small, they may be just "topped and tailed" and cut in half lengthwise; some people even leave the skin on. In any case, leave the cucumbers in large pieces. Cut them lengthwise and remove the seeds.

### Cucumber Nests

Use young apple cucumbers. Peel, cut in halves, and scoop out centre. Fill centre with such fillings as tinned fish mayonnaise and chopped, hard-boiled egg, cold cooked fish and chopped parsley, or cooked peas and mayonnaise sprinkled with finely chopped mint. Lay on green salad on individual plates. Put a ring of grated carrot round, and decorate with slices of beetroot and tomato. Serve with good dressing. Small ordinary cucumbers may be used cut lengthwise.

### Chinese Dish with Cucumber

This is an authentic Chinese recipe, given to me in Washington. It specifies  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of "chicken bouillon" which we cannot buy here; but we could use a little marmite or meat-essence dissolved in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of hot water—unless we had some liquor left from boiling a fowl. You need 1lb. calf's liver. Slice this in thick pieces (about 1in. thick) and place in a mixing bowl. Sprinkle over 2 teaspoons cornflour, 1 teaspoon salt, a dash of pepper and 4 tablespoons of oil or melted fat, and blend in thoroughly. Put 2 tablespoons of oil or fat, 1 teaspoon salt and a dash of pepper into a pre-heated frying pan. Add the liver mixture and cook over a moderate flame, stirring constantly, until brown. Remove half of the peeling of 4 large cucumbers in lengthwise strips. Cut lengthwise in 4 parts, remove seeds and slice diagonally in  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick slices, and add to

pan, with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chicken bouillon. Cover pan tightly and cook over a moderate flame for about 5 minutes, or until cucumbers are tender. Then add 1 tablespoon of sliced spring onions. Serve immediately, with hot, boiled rice when available. Serves 4.

### Pickled Cucumbers (Jewish method)

In a small barrel or stone jar, put a thin layer of salt and sugar, then grape leaves. Now put the cucumbers—do not cut or skin them. Repeat till jar is full. Seal well, and the pickle will be ready in about two months.

### Cucumber Relish

Two pounds of apples; 1 quart vinegar;  $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sugar; 2lb. onions; 3lb. cucumbers; 1 teaspoon cayenne;  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. salt. Peel and cut up apples. Cook in vinegar until soft. Add sugar. Boil for a few minutes. Stand aside till cold. Mince onions and cucumbers, and add uncooked to other ingredients. Bottle. Can be used in 2 weeks.

## FROM THE MAILBAG

### Practical Hints About Cakes for Britain

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Some time ago I saw in *The Listener* that some of my sister readers had disappointments with the cakes made for overseas. In one sense I felt a bit worried as I had just made and sent three, which as you know took a bit of doing. I got fruit from far and wide and went without a lot of things I would have liked to make for my own family. I am an English woman, and received several letters from members of my family saying they had to wait  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours for a bit of cake, and even then, although quite hungry, could scarcely eat it—"it was like sawdust," one of them said. So I thought a cake would be a nice surprise for Christmas. During the war I made and sent cakes to my two sailor sons, also to an English airman in Italy. I had nothing but praise, so they must have been all right. I have just received three airmail letters, saying how beautiful the cakes were. "It's a wonder you did not hear the children yelling with delight in New Zealand," said one letter; and another, "If you could only have seen the children's eyes! You see, they have never seen such a big cake before!" The cakes had arrived quite safely, and although iced with a Christmas decoration did not even have a crack on them. It is needless to say how happy I am with the good results, for you know what a lot of trouble they were.

This is how I went about it, if it will help my sister readers. It would be so lovely if a few more cakes could be sent. I bought the tins, of course, and lightly greased them with a smear of lard, after washing them. Then I lined the tins with luncheon paper, smeared with lard.

This is my recipe:—One and a-half breakfast cups of flour, 2 good handfuls of ground rice (if not procurable, two breakfast cups flour), 1 breakfast cup sugar, 2 teaspoons baking powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each of any dried fruits, including dates, preserved or artificial cherries if liked, 1 round of mixed peel, 3 or 4 eggs (having