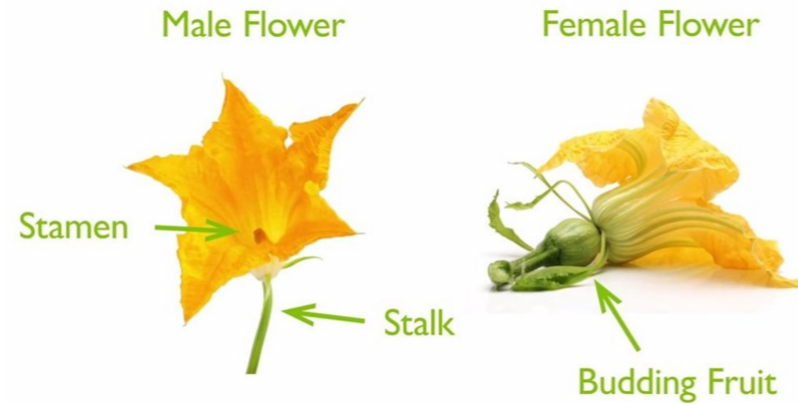




All about Cucumbers

Did you know cucumbers have separate male and female flowers? In the old days you had to remove the male flowers to stop them pollinating the female flowers which makes the fruit taste bitter. Modern varieties only produce female flowers so this is no longer a problem.

FLOWER



What are cucumbers ?

Cucumbers are part of the melon family. This means that they are fruits

Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) is a widely cultivated plant in the gourd family, Cucurbitaceae.

The cucumber is a creeping vine that roots in the ground and grows up trellises or other supporting frames, wrapping around supports with thin, spiralling tendrils. The plant may also root in a soilless medium and will sprawl along the ground if it does not have supports. The vine has large leaves that form a canopy over the fruits.



PLANT

Leaf



Primary roots Absorb water and minerals

Stem supports the plant

The fruit of typical cucumber is roughly cylindrical, but elongated with tapered ends, and may be as large as 60 centimetres (24 in) long and 10 centimetres (3.9 in) in diameter. Much like tomato and squash, it is often perceived, prepared and eaten as a vegetable. Cucumber fruits consist of 95% water.

What is the difference between a gherkin and cucumber ?

Simply put, **gherkins** are still **cucumbers**. They both belong to the *cucumis* genus **in the** gourd family. **Gherkins** refer to the variety of the **cucumber** fruit which tends to grow smaller. The **difference** is really more to do with the generic term used by US and UK cultures rather than the kind of fruit that is being pickled.

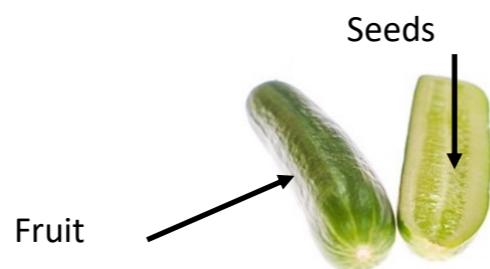
What's the difference between a cucumber and a courgette?

Taste. When eating **cucumbers** or **courgette** (zucchini) raw, they have **different** textures and flavours. A **cucumber** is typically crisp and juicy while **courgettes** are 'heartier' and tend to be a little bitter.

Most cucumbers are seeded and require pollination. Thousands of hives of honey bees are annually carried to cucumber fields just before bloom for this purpose. Traditional cucumbers produce male blossoms first, then female, in about equivalent numbers



FRUIT



Check out our Clever Cucumber facts for children:

-  Cucumbers are a green vegetable consumed by humans.
-  Humans have been cultivating and eating cucumbers for at least 3,000 years.
-  Cucumbers originated in India (South Asia) but are now grown worldwide.
-  Cucumbers are harvested from the vine plant *Cucumis sativus* and its varieties.
-  There are over 120 different varieties of cucumbers cultivated.
-  The varieties of cucumbers are separated into three groups, and they are slicing, pickling and burpless/seedless.
-  The outer part of a cucumber is called the peel; this is the green skin surrounding a cucumber.
-  The inner part of a cucumber is called the flesh; this is the soft, light green mass inside the peel.
-  The centre part of a cucumber contains seeds. Some cucumber varieties do not have any seeds.
-  Cucumbers are one of the most cultivated vegetables in the worldwide
-  According to the Guinness World Records, the world record for the longest cucumber is 42.1 inches. This record was set on September 26th, 2011 by Ian Neale in the UK and the heaviest cucumber is 23 pounds and 7 ounces. This record was set on September 26th, 2015 by David Thomas in the UK.

Cultivation history of cucumber

The cucumber originated in India, where a great many varieties have been observed. It has been cultivated for at least 3,000 years, and was probably introduced to other parts of Europe by the Greeks or Romans. Records of cucumber cultivation appear in France in the 9th century, England in the 14th century, and in North America by the mid-16th century.



Cucumbers are Available:

They are available all year round and can be purchased from supermarkets and local farm shops.



What to Look for When Buying Cucumbers:

Pick cucumbers that are firm and green in colour. Avoid cucumbers that are soft or have nicks or cracks. Some varieties are long and slender and some are short and round.

Cucumber Facts- Storage Tips:

Store in fridge

How to Cook with Cucumbers:

Eat in salads, make pickles with them, use as garnishes, or side dishes

