

Four Friends' CSA News

The Bean Pole

August 25, 2009

2009 Season

Issue No. 51

Dear Shareholders and Friends,

Here's the harvest list for this week; Cucumbers, green beans, heirloom tomatoes, carrots, beets, and heads of lettuce.

Tzaziki

2 cups of plain yogurt*
2 teaspoons of pureed fresh garlic
1 teaspoon of kosher salt
2 cucumbers peeled, seeded, and chopped
A sprinkle of freshly ground black pepper
A tablespoon of olive oil
Garnish with fresh mint, or fresh parsley leaves

Drain the yogurt for at least an hour in a fine mesh strainer, or a strainer lined with cheesecloth. Draining it overnight in the refrigerator will give the yogurt an even more sufficient thickness for your Tzaziki. Combine the thickened yogurt, pureed garlic, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt in a mixing bowl. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt on the chopped cucumbers and let them drain for about 30 minutes. Fold the drained cucumber into the yogurt and garlic mixture and add freshly ground black pepper to taste. Refrigerate for at least one hour before serving. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Serve with pita bread or as a salad side dish with grilled lamb or fish.

- If you use the Mediterranean style yogurt, it's already thick enough to make this draining process unnecessary, and you will only need one cup.

CUCUMBERS

History

Cucumbers were thought to originate over 10,000 years ago in southern Asia. Early explorers and travelers introduced this vegetable to India and other parts of Asia. It was very popular in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Rome, whose people used it not only as a food but also for its beneficial skin healing properties. Greenhouse cultivation of cucumbers was originally invented during the time of Louis XIV, who greatly appreciated this delightful vegetable. The early colonists introduced cucumbers to the United States.

While it is unknown when the pickling process was developed, researchers speculate that the gherkin variety of cucumber was developed from a plant native to Africa. During ancient times, Spain was one of the countries that was pickling cucumbers since Roman emperors were said to have imported them from this Mediterranean country.

How to Select and Store

As cucumbers are very sensitive to heat, choose ones that are displayed in refrigerated cases in the market. They should be firm, rounded at their edges, and their color should be a bright medium to dark green. Avoid cucumbers that are yellow, puffy, have sunken water-soaked areas, or are wrinkled at their tips. Thinner cucumbers will generally have less seeds than those that are thicker. While many people are used to purchasing cucumbers that have a waxed coating, it is highly recommended to choose those that are unwaxed, so the nutrient-rich skin can be eaten without consuming the wax and any chemicals trapped in it.

Cucumbers should be stored in the refrigerator where they will keep for several days. If you do not use the entire cucumber during one meal, wrap the remainder tightly in plastic or place it in a sealed container so that it does not become dried out. For maximum quality, cucumber should be used within one or two days. Cucumbers should not be left out at room temperature for too long as this will cause them to wilt and become limp.

Cucumbers, slices, with peel 1.00 cup 104.00 grams 13.52 calories				
Nutrient	Amount	DV (%)	Nutrient Density	World's Healthiest Foods Rating
vitamin C	5.51 mg	9.2	12.2	very good
molybdenum	5.20 mcg	6.9	9.2	very good
vitamin A	223.60 IU	4.5	6.0	good
potassium	149.76 mg	4.3	5.7	good
manganese	0.08 mg	4.0	5.3	good
folate	13.52 mcg	3.4	4.5	good
dietary fiber	0.83 g	3.3	4.4	good
tryptophan	0.01 g	3.1	4.2	good
magnesium	11.44 mg	2.9	3.8	good

FARM NEWS :

- **Cucumber and slicing tomatoes...finally have arrived. It was a tough year for both of these crops!**
- **We could certainly use some rain about now; The fields are dry, and I think the farmers are too tired to set up the irrigation in their respective acres and turn on the diesel pump!**