

Asian Cucumber Salad: Refreshing, Zesty & Spicy Side Dish

Get ready for a burst of refreshing flavor with this incredible



TIME
15-20 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds cucumbers (about 5 cups sliced, English or Persian cucumbers recommended)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (for drawing out water)
- 1 teaspoon ginger, grated (fresh)
- 4-5 scallions (green onions), finely sliced
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar (not seasoned rice vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup (or honey)
- 1 teaspoon chili garlic sauce, more to taste (like Huy Fong brand)
- 1-2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Swaps and Notes:

Cucumbers: English or Persian cucumbers are ideal as they have thin skins and fewer seeds, requiring less prep. Regular cucumbers can be used but may need to be peeled and seeded.

Salt: Regular table salt or fine sea salt works for drawing out water.

Ginger: Freshly grated ginger provides the best vibrant flavor. Ground ginger is not a good substitute here.

Scallions: Adds a mild oniony freshness. You can also use very thinly sliced red onion.

Garlic: Freshly minced garlic is crucial for the aromatic punch.

Rice Vinegar: Unseasoned rice vinegar is preferred for its clean, mild acidity. Do not use seasoned rice vinegar, which has added sugar and salt.

Soy Sauce: Use regular or low-sodium soy sauce. Tamari is a great gluten-free alternative.

Toasted Sesame Oil: This is key for the distinct nutty, aromatic flavor. Ensure it's toasted sesame oil.

Maple Syrup/Honey: Adds a touch of sweetness to balance the tang and spice. Adjust to your preference.

Chili Garlic Sauce: This provides a fantastic savory heat. Adjust the amount (1 teaspoon to more) to your desired spice level. Sriracha can be used as an alternative, but chili garlic sauce offers more texture and a slightly different flavor.

Toasted Sesame Seeds: Adds a nutty flavor and delightful crunch.

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get this refreshing : Asian Cucumber Salad assembled!
2. Prepare : Cucumbers: Using the tines of a fork, score the cucumbers lengthwise. This creates shallow grooves that help the dressing adhere better. Then, thinly slice the cucumbers into rounds or half-moons. Place the sliced cucumbers in a bowl. Toss them with 1/2 teaspoon of salt. This step is essential as it helps to draw out excess water, ensuring your cucumbers remain crisp. Let the cucumbers sit in the bowl while you prepare the other ingredients (about 15-20 minutes).
3. Strain : Cucumbers: After resting, you'll notice a pool of water at the bottom of the bowl. Strain the cucumbers through a colander, but do not rinse them. The salt on the cucumbers helps season them. Transfer the strained cucumbers to a large mixing bowl.
4. Add : Dressing Ingredients: To the large bowl with the strained cucumbers, add the finely sliced scallions, grated fresh ginger, finely minced garlic, 1/4 cup rice vinegar, 1 tablespoon soy sauce, 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil, 1 tablespoon maple syrup, 1 teaspoon chili garlic sauce (or more, to taste), and 1-2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds.
5. Toss : Thoroughly: Mix everything thoroughly with a spoon or tongs to ensure all the cucumbers are well coated with the vibrant dressing and seasonings.
6. Taste and : Adjust: Taste the salad and adjust the seasoning as needed. You might want to add a little more salt (if using plain cucumbers), or more chili paste for extra heat, depending on your preference. Mix briefly again if adjusting.

7. Chill: For the best flavor, refrigerate the Asian Cucumber Salad until ready to serve, allowing the flavors to meld and deepen. This salad is best served the same day for optimal crispness, but can be stored for up to 3 days.

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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Salt & Drain Cucumbers: This is the most crucial step for a crisp, non-watery salad.

Don't skip it, and don't rinse after salting.

Thinly Slice Cucumbers: Uniform, thin slices ensure even seasoning and a delicate texture.

A mandoline slicer can help achieve this.

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