Cucumber

Background:
Crunchy, refreshing, and cool mouthfeel
Goes great in salads, sandwiches, dips, and drinks
Different types of cucumbers include: English (seedless), garden, Kirby, and Persian, which differentiate by their growing seasons and eating conditions
Typically consumed raw but can be sautéed, baked, or boiled
Found in American, Indian, Asian, and Mediterranean cuisines

Nutritional Value:
Cucumbers have over 90% water content, and therefore are very low in calories and can help meet hydration recommendations
Cucumbers contain the following micronutrients:

- **Vitamin K**—aids in bone health and blood clotting. 1 cup of cucumbers can provide up to 11% of daily vitamin K needs

- **B vitamins**—necessary in red blood cell production and energy metabolism; *folate* and *B9* are highest in cucumbers

- **Potassium**—important in heart activity and muscle contraction

*Phytonutrients flavonoids* and *lignans*—good for heart health and have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory characteristics
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How to SHOP:
Find fresh cucumbers in the grocery store near other green vegetables in the produce section
Look for ripe cucumbers that have firm, green flesh without blemishes, soft spots, or wrinkles
Fresh cucumbers are available in Texas from May to November
Pickled cucumbers can be found in preserved aisles and are available year-round

How to GROW:
Cucumbers have a long growing season of around 2 months
Grow best in warm, humid climates from 60-90°F, making Texas a perfect growing location
Generally low maintenance crop but require space, loose and moist soil, and sunlight
Vines grow fast so frequent trimming is necessary. Use cages or other vertical support to encourage air circulation and growth.
Harvest cucumbers when 2-8” long and medium to dark green. Overgrown cucumbers are yellow

How to STORE:
Store cucumbers away from bananas, melons, and tomatoes to prevent spoilage from ethylene gas
Increase storage time by storing cucumbers in the refrigerator up to one week in a loose plastic bag