



TOOLKIT & ACTIVITY GUIDE

A project of the **American Friends Service Committee, New Mexico Program**

www.afsc.org/newmexico 505.2842.7343



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Hello Teachers!

We are excited to share the joy of cucumber season with your class! These cucumbers are grown right here in Bernalillo County by small, local, pesticide-free family farms.

Please encourage the children to try these cucumbers by making it a fun challenge and offering a sticker to each child who is “brave enough” to try a cucumber! The teachers’ Activity Guide has fun activities to engage kids in Cool Cucumber Crunch through a variety of early childhood skills such as language, fine motor, gross motor, creativity and play!

Agriculture is an important part of New Mexican culture and makes our community resilient in the face of challenges. We want to encourage children to eat healthy by asking families to taste test local cucumbers this harvest season.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a local nonprofit organization that works to connect farmers and schools to get healthy food to children. If you have any questions, please call our office at 505-842-7343. Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/afscnm/>

Sincerely,
Angelina Lopez-Brody
Program Assistant, AFSC New Mexico

Sayrah Namaste
Program Director, AFSC New Mexico

Note: Introducing new foods can take anywhere from 10–20 tries, this may be a child’s first time or subsequent try with a new food!

Thank you for connecting farming and local foods to Early Childhood Education in New Mexico!

GUIDE FOR PARTNERING WITH KITCHEN STAFF

1. Plan ahead

Request to schedule time with kitchen staff to assist with food preparation and food safety standards when preparing food for consumption.

2. Assess available utensils

Determine with kitchen staff if there will be enough utensils for the activity.

3. Coordinate food preparation

Determine what kinds of food preparation is needed, if any. (e.g. cutting, steaming, blending, etc.)

4. Thank You go a long way

Have children make a thank you card for kitchen staff for their help with food activities!

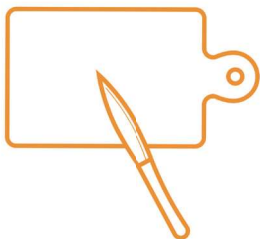
FOOD DETECTIVES

SUPPORTED EARLY CHILDHOOD SKILLS

(Language, Sensory, Cognitive, and Communication)

Equipment

- ✧ knife
- ✧ cutting board



Materials

- ✧ 1 whole cucumber
- ✧ taste-testing samples of cucumber without skin (small pieces no larger than ½ inch)
- ✧ stickers
- ✧ small plates/paper plates (*optional*)

Overview

In this lesson, encourage children to describe what a cucumber looks like. Children will also share if they like how a cucumber feels, smells and tastes.

Before the Lesson

Select one whole cucumber for children to closely examine. Prepare one or more samples of cucumber pieces for the children to taste.

- ✧ Peel a whole cucumber and blend until smooth. Serve blended cucumber as a tasting option.
- ✧ Peel a whole cucumber and quarter lengthwise. Steam for 2 minutes and completely cool. Cube into ½ inch pieces and serve as a tasting option.

Introduction

This activity will work well as a circle time activity and at tables, in small groups, for tasting.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce a new food to the children in your classroom. The more times children are exposed to new foods, the more likely they are to eat and enjoy these foods in the future.

Words to Use

- ✧ cucumber
- ✧ green
- ✧ sweet
- ✧ juicy
- ✧ squishy
- ✧ crunchy
- ✧ seeds
- ✧ farmer
- ✧ smooth
- ✧ bumpy

Fun Prompts to Use:

“Cucumbers are fruits and vegetables that are filled with water.”

“Cucumbers have a green skin on the outside.”

“Cucumbers are good for our bodies when we eat them.”

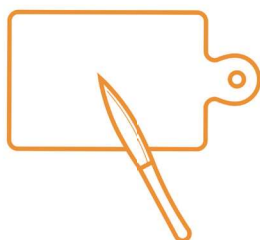
CUCUMBER SOUP

SUPPORTED EARLY CHILDHOOD SKILLS

(Sensory, Fine Motor and Physical)

Equipment Required

- ✧ small shallow tray for each child, if available (*no deeper than 2 inches is recommended*)
- ✧ slotted spoon
- ✧ tongs
- ✧ cutting board
- ✧ knife
- ✧ towel (*optional*)



Materials

- ✧ thinly sliced cucumber
- ✧ water (water in tray should not exceed 1 inch in depth)
- ✧ paper plates (*optional*)

Overview

In this activity, children will be making “cucumber soup.” Children will be asked to put thin slices of cucumber into a shallow tray of water. Encourage children to scoop pieces of cucumber from the water with a slotted spoon or tongs and place on a paper plate to eat.

Before the Lesson

- ✧ Select one whole cucumber and peel. Cut cucumber into thin slices that will float in shallow water. Fill shallow tray with no more than 1 inch of water for cucumber slices to float.
- ✧ Prepare the play area so that children are sitting on the floor, ground or tables. Ensure children’s clothing is appropriate for getting wet.
- ✧ Encourage children to use utensil to take cucumber slices out of water tray. Encourage children to eat slices that are placed on their plate.

Introduction

This activity will work well as a circle time activity and at tables, in small groups.

Fun Prompts to Use:

“Let’s make cucumber soup!”

“See how the cucumbers float on the top?”

“Let’s see if we can take some of the cucumbers out with the tongs/spoon.”

COLORING PAGE

SUPPORTED EARLY
CHILDHOOD SKILLS
(Fine Motor and Cognitive)

(see next page)

C



CUCUMBER

FOOD DETECTIVES

SUPPORTED EARLY CHILDHOOD SKILLS

(Language, Sensory, Cognitive, and Communication)

Overview

In this lesson, children will describe what a cucumber looks like under a magnifying glass. Children will also share if they like how a cucumber feels, smells and tastes. In addition, children will explore what happens when salt interacts with a cucumber slice and describe what happens.

Before the Lesson

Select one whole cucumber for children to closely examine. Prepare one or more samples of cucumber pieces for the children to taste.

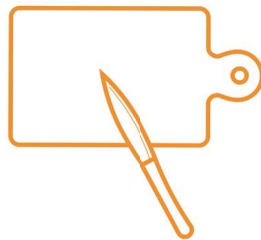
(Optional)

Cut cucumber into different shapes:

- ✧ slices
- ✧ spears
- ✧ cubed
- ✧ thin strips

Equipment

- ✧ knife
- ✧ cutting board



Materials

- ✧ 1 whole cucumber
- ✧ taste-testing samples of cucumber
- ✧ stickers
- ✧ magnifying glasses
- ✧ small plates/paper plates/small cups *(optional)*
- ✧ salt
- ✧ 1 large piece of butcher paper
- ✧ Post-It Notes

Introduction

This activity will work well as a circle time activity and at tables, in small groups, for tasting.

When children are describing the cucumber, write their responses on stickies and ask them to add them to a large piece of butcher paper. Label the butcher paper “What Is a Cucumber?”

Describing Words to Use

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| ✧ cucumber | ✧ seeds |
| ✧ green | ✧ farmer |
| ✧ sweet | ✧ smooth |
| ✧ juicy | ✧ bumpy |
| ✧ squishy | ✧ tasty |
| ✧ crisp | ✧ smooth |
| ✧ refreshing | ✧ rough |
| ✧ tender | |

Fun Prompts to Use:

“Cucumbers are fruits and vegetables that are filled with water.”

“Cucumbers have a green skin on the outside.”

“Cucumbers are good for our bodies when we eat them.”

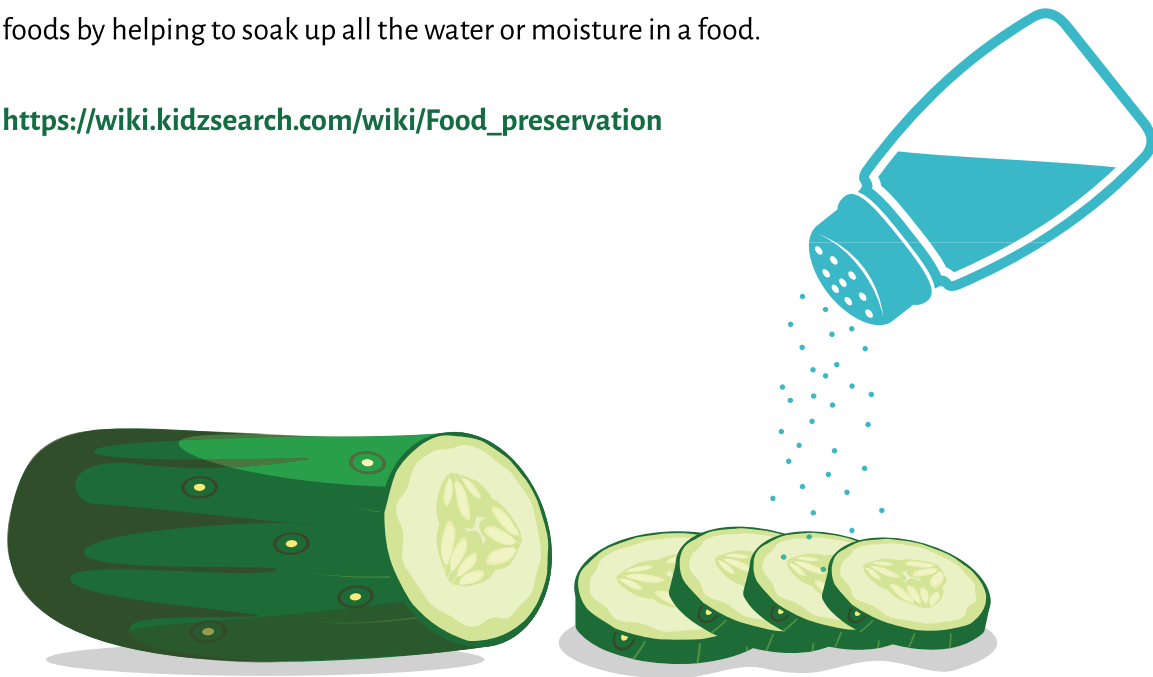
FOOD DETECTIVES

(continued)

Steps for Cucumber Salt Experiment

1. Slice 2-3 pieces of cucumber and place on a paper plate.
2. Ask children to completely cover each slice with salt.
3. Leave in a place that will be undisturbed and observe with children the following day.
4. Ask children to describe what happened to the cucumber.
5. Prompt: Salt can preserve food like what happened to this cucumber. Humans have used preservatives for a long time and salt was very important in ancestral times, or when people lived a long time ago, because it helped foods like meat from going bad. Salt can help to make foods last longer. Salt can be used to preserve foods by helping to soak up all the water or moisture in a food.

https://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Food_preservation



CUCUMBER PUNCH

**SUPPORTED EARLY
CHILDHOOD SKILLS**

(Cognitive and Sensory)

Equipment Required

- ✧ cutting board
- ✧ knife
- ✧ pitcher (*a clear container is preferred*)

Materials

- ✧ sliced cucumbers
- ✧ sliced limes and/or lemons
- ✧ mint leaves (*optional*)
- ✧ drinking water
- ✧ small cups
- ✧ spoons
- ✧ paper plates (*optional*)

Overview

In this activity, children will be encouraged to make cucumber punch. Children will also share if they like how cucumber punch tastes.

Before the Lesson

Select one whole cucumber and prepare by cutting slices with and without the outer skin.

Introduction

This activity will work well at tables, in small groups.

Fun Prompts to Use:

“Let’s make cucumber punch!”

“See how the cucumbers float on the top?”

“Let’s see if we can take some of the cucumbers out with the tongs/spoon.”



CUCUMBER PUNCH!

FOR 2-5 YEAR-OLDS

Ingredients

- ◇ drinking water (*optional with ice cubes*)
- ◇ 2 sliced cucumbers
- ◇ 2 sliced limes or lemons
- ◇ 2 sprigs of mint leaves (*optional*)

Directions

Place sliced cucumber, limes, lemons, and mint in drinking cup. Lightly mash pieces if you prefer more taste. Add water and ice cubes. *Enjoy!*



CUCUMBER PUNCH!

FOR 2-5 YEAR-OLDS

Ingredients

- ◇ drinking water (*optional with ice cubes*)
- ◇ 2 sliced cucumbers
- ◇ 2 sliced limes or lemons
- ◇ 2 sprigs of mint leaves (*optional*)

Directions

Place sliced cucumber, limes, lemons, and mint in drinking cup. Lightly mash pieces if you prefer more taste. Add water and ice cubes. *Enjoy!*



CUCUMBER FAMILY FINGER FUN

Materials

- ✧ green paint
- ✧ paper plates
- ✧ markers
- ✧ *(optional)* other craft materials to decorate plate

SUPPORTED EARLY CHILDHOOD SKILLS

(Cognitive, Fine Motor, Communication and Sensory Skills)

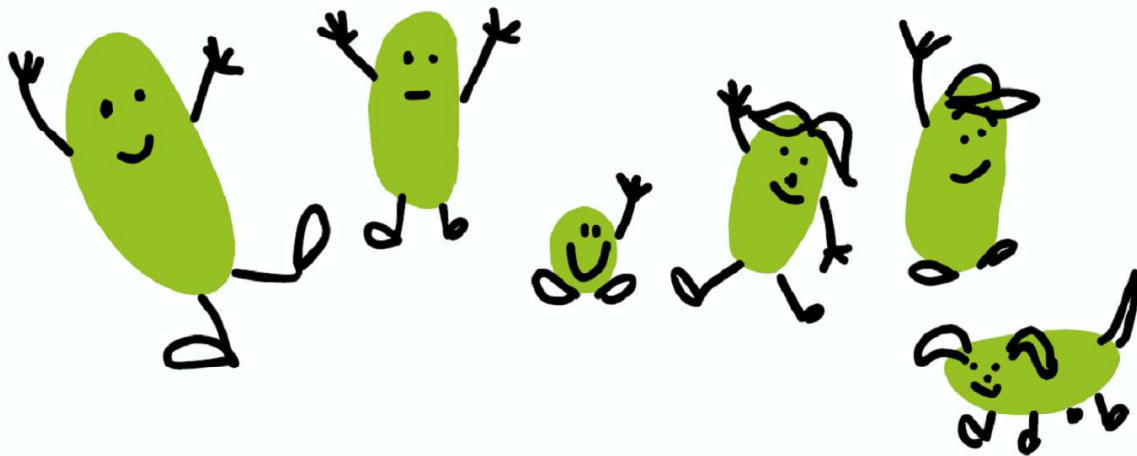
Overview

In this art activity, encourage children to use their fingerprints using paint to create their imaginary cucumber family. Children will be asked to decorate and label their cucumber family members.

Introduction

This activity will work well at tables, in small groups.

My Cucumber Family



CUCUMBER WALK/SIT

**SUPPORTED EARLY
CHILDHOOD SKILLS**
(Physical and Cognitive Skills)

Equipment

- ✧ a device to play music

Materials

- ✧ cucumber printouts (*see 11 pages at back of guide*)
- ✧ Scotch tape
- ✧ music
- ✧ fun stickers
- ✧ chairs (*alternative*)

Overview

In this interactive game children will be asked to move slowly in a line to playing music. When the music stops the children stop on a number. A number is called out by the teacher and if a child has stopped on that number, they win a sticker! Children can remain in the rotation and collect stickers. Children whose number is called can also decide if they would like to share an additional sticker with another child who does not have one yet! Sharing is caring!

(Optional)

- ✧ Laminate cucumber printouts.
- ✧ Tape cucumber printouts to the front side of chairs and have children sit down instead.

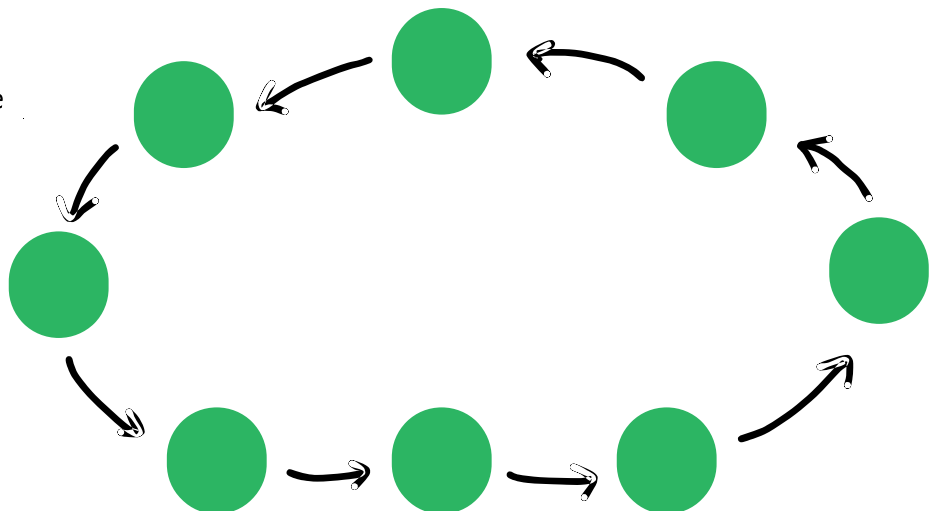
Introduction

This activity will work well indoors in a large area for lots of movement and outside on a flat surface.

Activity Resources

Songs on Sharing

- ✧ Cocomelon – Sharing Song
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96fq4YmYjzQ>
- ✧ Jack Johnson – The Sharing Song
<https://youtu.be/TYjlg5QDO3o>
- ✧ Sesame Street: Sharing Song!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewhwY5-EP38>



IS IT A CUCUMBER?

**SUPPORTED EARLY
CHILDHOOD SKILLS**

**(Problem Solving, Cognitive
and Fine Motor)**

Materials

- ✧ cucumber worksheets (*next 2 pages*)
- ✧ safety scissors
- ✧ glue stick

Overview

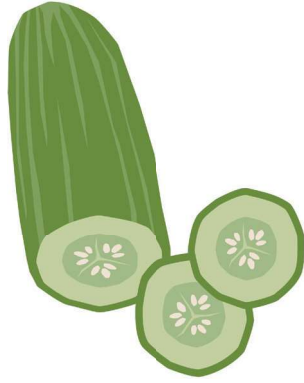
In this activity, children will be introduced to photos of vegetables. Encourage children to cut each photo out one by one. Ask children to determine which images are cucumbers and which ones are not and glue them to their worksheet.

Introduction

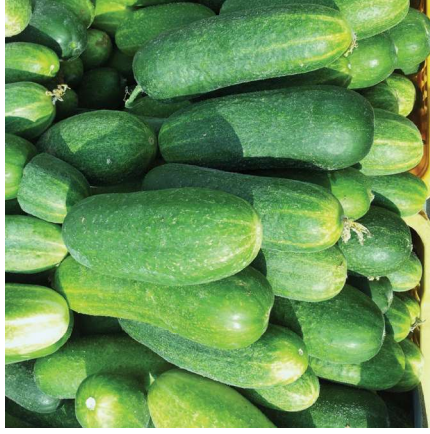
This activity will work well at tables, in small groups.

THESE ARE CUCUMBERS

THESE ARE NOT CUCUMBERS



IS IT A CUCUMBER? (PICTURE CUT OUTS)



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SUPPORTED EARLY
CHILDHOOD SKILLS

(Fine Motor and Cognitive)

(see next page)

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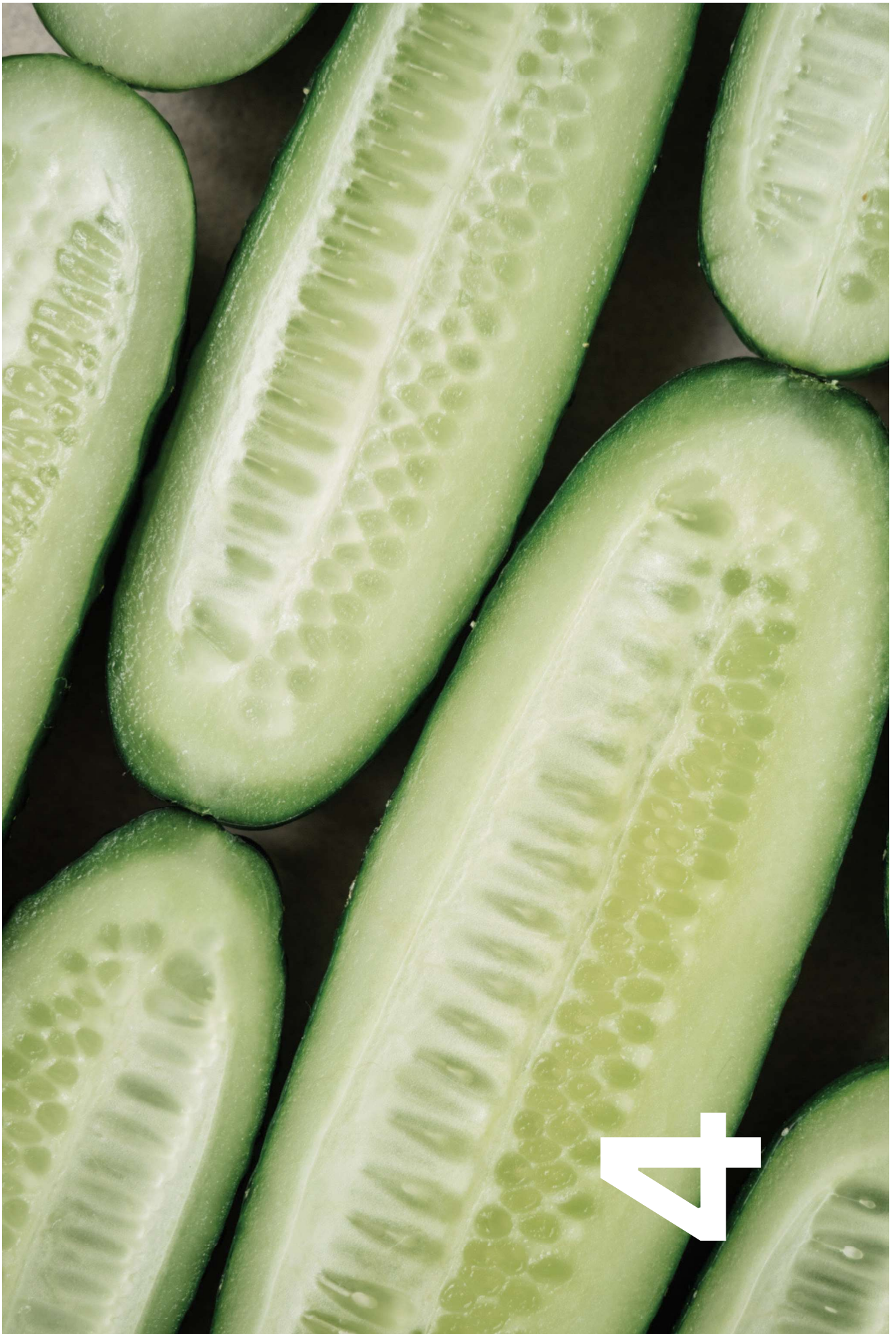
CUCUMBER

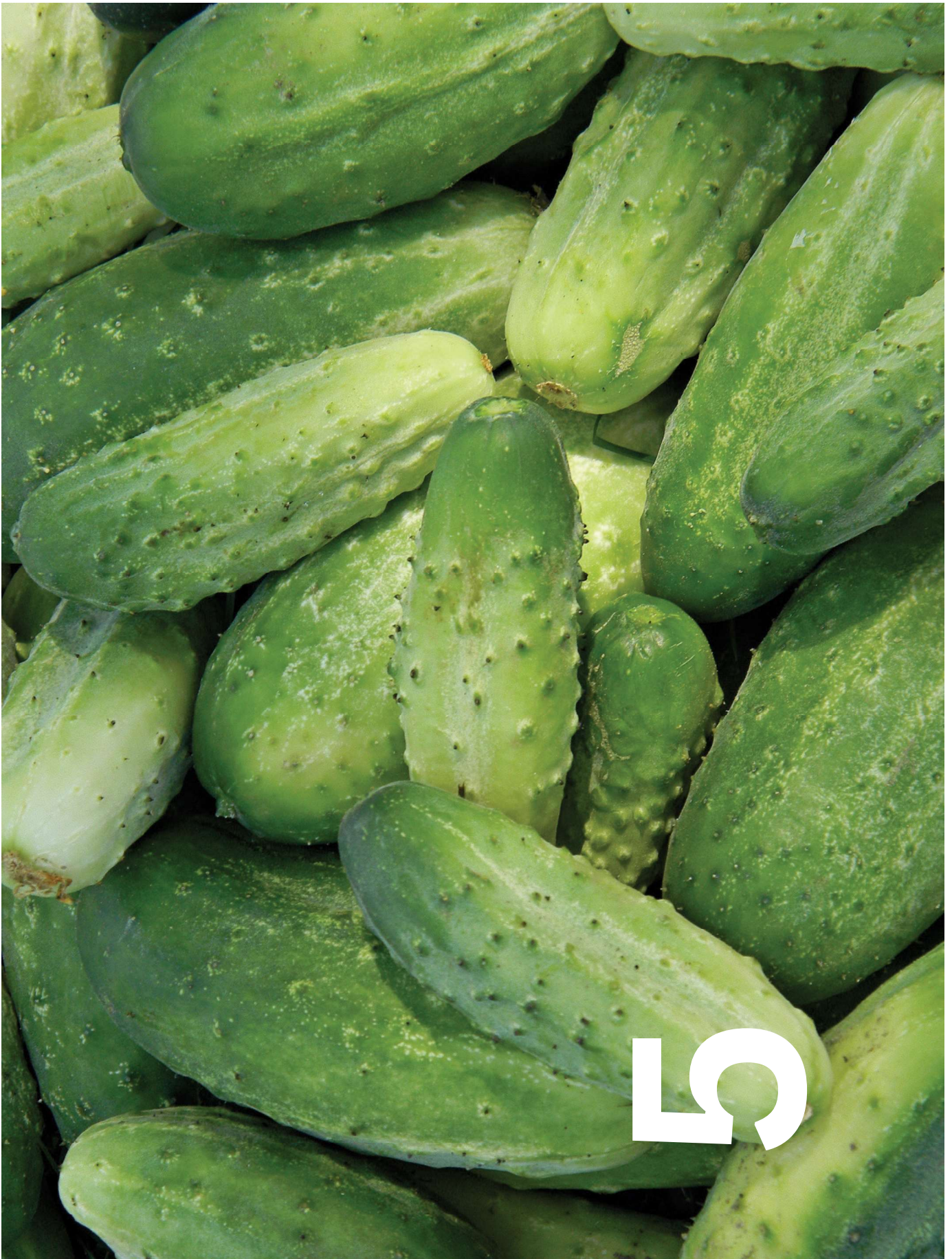




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