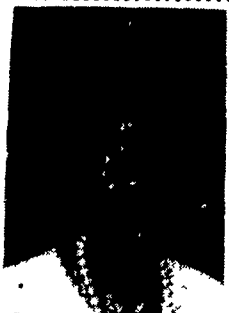




## Ladies, Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas,  
Extension Home Economist



Doris Thomas

### About Cucumbers

The cucumber's role as a leading light in the salad world goes a long, long way back — to the time of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, who demanded one of the crispy green vegetables every day of the year!

Actually, the cucumber is botanically a fruit, a member of the melon family, but it's served as a vegetable. Thin, delicate

cucumber slices — marinated in sour cream or French dressing — or thick, crunchy chunks, are delicious in a wide variety of summer salads.

Unlike Emperor Tiberius, for all of us non-emperors it's best to buy cucumbers in the summertime. That's because cukes and other fresh vegetables are at seasonal peak and in especially plentiful supply. Other abundant

summer vegetables include tomatoes, lettuce, celery, and sweet corn.

Not long ago the style was to peel away the sprightly green cucumber skin, and serve only the snowy-white inside. Fortunately this wasteful practice has been abandoned, and it's now popular to eat the whole cuke. To create unpared cucumber slices with a scalloped effect, score the cucumber lengthwise with a fork before slicing.

For extra-tasty potato salad, try adding some chopped cucumber. The crispy goodness of the cucumber contributes an enjoyable texture to the usual softness of this salad.

When selecting cukes look for cucumbers which are firm over their entire length and have a good green color. Good cucumbers typically have many small lumps on their surfaces. They may also have some white or greenish-white color and still be of top quality. Avoid overgrown cucumbers which are large in diameter and have a dull color, turning yellowish. Also avoid cucumbers with withered or shriveled ends — signs of toughness and bitter flavor.

Cool it, With Watermelon  
Cool it — with cool and juicy, sweet and flavorful watermelon. Now in seasonally plentiful

supply, the inimitable thirst quencher is one of the best values at the produce counter, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service.

If you're buying a cut melon, pick a firm, fresh, bright-colored beauty to enjoy it at its best. Dry mealy flesh or watery stringy flesh usually are signs of an over-ripe or old melon. Stay away from melons with a hard white streak running lengthwise through the flesh — it's a condition known as "white heart". Look at the seeds for another clue to ripeness — dark brown or black seeds usually mean the melon is fully mature. And a thin rind is preferable; a thick rind is wasteful.

Often, you may get an especially good buy on a whole melon. Then it's harder to tell what it will be like when you cut it open. For some indication as to ripeness, look for a symmetrical shape and a velvety bloom — a dull rather than shiny surface. Notice the underside of the melon — if ripe, it's apt to be turning from white or pale green to a light-yellowish color.

Now what to do with that wonderful watermelon? Most people prefer it just as is, cut in a thick slice across or in a wedge to be eaten by biting deep into the dripping juicy flesh or more daintily with knife and fork.

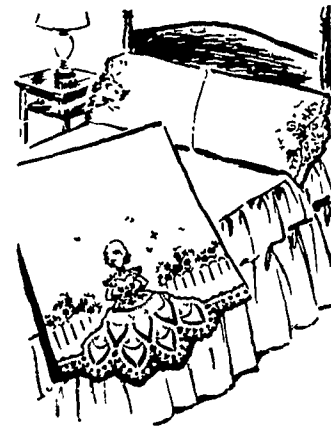
Another good way to serve it is diced for a fruit salad. Or scoop out the flesh, dice or ball it and combine with other fruits and melons, than replace in the boat-like shell — a sumptuous creation for a party.

### Potatoes

When the Spanish conquistadores explored the Peruvian Andes, they discovered that the Indians cultivated an odd-looking plant, the potato. The potato was brought to Spain about 1585 and was first considered poisonous. It is believed to have been first introduced into North America in 1621 by English settlers in Virginia.

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