



Tasting Experience Activity

Cucumbers



Time Needed: 15 – 30 minutes

Setting: Kitchen

Activity Overview:

Participate in a discussion on ingredient characteristics and quality.
Explore the effect added ingredients have on appearance and flavor.

Materials Needed:

Fresh English (Hot House) Cucumbers
2 Mixing bowls
2 Rubber spatulas
2-3 Fresh lemons
Microplane: this is a long, thin, fine grater that will be used for zesting the lemons. *See photo on right.*
Sumac
Garlicky-Dill Pickles prepared ahead of time. *The recipe is on page 3.*
Portion cups or small plates
Tongs for serving
Water for participants



Tasting Experience Prep:

Prepare Garlicky-Dill Pickles 1-2 days prior to Tasting Experience Activity.
On the day of the activity, wash remaining cucumbers and slice them into 1/4-inch slices.
Each participant will taste four 1/4-inch slices of cucumber.

Goal: To increase culinary knowledge and skills within school nutrition kitchen teams.

Objectives — Participants will be able to:

- Identify characteristics of fresh, raw, sliced cucumbers
- Recognize how flavor develops and affects appearance of food
- Practice how to cross-utilize a base ingredient across a weekly menu
- Answer questions and share new knowledge about the importance of flavor
- Identify options for enhancing flavor and appearance

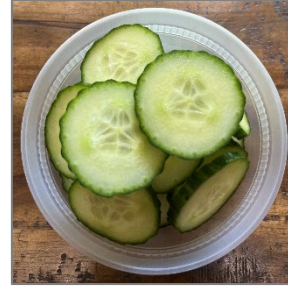
Instructions:

Review the activity overview, goal, and objectives.

TIP: Encourage participants to drink water between tastings for best flavor discovery.

Give all participants a slice of fresh, raw cucumber. Have everyone observe and try the sliced cucumber; then, discuss.

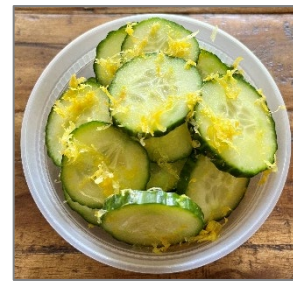
Guide a discussion on the characteristics of the sliced cucumber. Ask for details about the color, flavor, and texture.



Next, use the microplane to add fresh lemon zest to enough cucumber slices for each participant.

Give all participants a slice of cucumber with lemon zest. Have participants observe and try.

Guide a discussion on how the flavor changed. Ask how does the zest affect the appearance and taste.



Then, sprinkle sumac on enough cucumber slices for each participant.

Give all participants a slice of cucumber with sumac. Have participants observe and try.

Guide a discussion on how the flavor changed. Ask how does the sumac affect the appearance and taste.



For the final tasting, give each participant a slice of the garlicky-dill pickle.

Have participants observe and try.

Guide a discussion on how the flavor changed. Ask how does pickling the cucumber affect the appearance and taste.



Conclude by asking participants to share what they learned about elevating flavor.



Garlicky-Dill Pickles

a recipe from Georgia School Nutrition Division



Portions: 50 Portion Size: 1/2 cup Meal Components:

Ingredients:

Cold Brine Base	11 cups
Herb, Dill, Fresh, lg stems removed	2 cups
Cucumber, English, Raw, Sliced	8.25 pounds



Steps:

1. Prepare the cold brine base per recipe.
2. Once the brine is completely cooled, stir in the fresh dill.
3. Add the sliced cucumbers and gently stir to ensure all slices are coated in the brine. Store in the cooler, covered, labeled, and dated, at 41°F or lower.
4. Allow the brine to pickle the cucumbers at least 4 hours or up to 5 days.



Cold Brine Base

a recipe from Georgia School Nutrition Division

Portions: 50 Portion Size: 1/2 cup Meal Components:

Ingredients:

Water	6 cups
Vinegar, Apple Cider	5 cups
Sugar, granulated	4 tablespoons
Salt, kosher	4 tablespoons
Garlic, fresh, cloves, whole	10 each
Red pepper flakes	1 tablespoon

Steps:

1. Stir water, vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic, and red pepper flakes together in a stock pot over high heat. Bring to a full boil.
2. Remove from the heat and cool completely.
NOTE – Do not add ice to speed up the cooling process. This will dilute your brine mixture. Place the entire stock pot in a vegetable sink. Surround with ice and stir occasionally as it cools.
Critical Control Point: Product temperature must reach 70°F within 2 hours and then 41°F within next 4 hours
3. Once the brine reaches 41°F or lower, add any additional spices or herbs. Add fruits or veggies. Store in the cooler, covered, labeled, and dated, at 41°F or lower
4. Allow the brine to pickle the fruits or vegetables at least 4 hours or up to 5 days.