

# Cucumber Stacks

Instructions and ingredient quantities are written for a class of approximately 20 children.



Recipe from Adam Hayes of Red Stag Grill

## Ingredients

7-8 local cucumbers (cut into large chunks that each child will slice into smaller pieces)  
25 slices of wheat or multi-grain bread  
8 oz. spreadable cream cheese  
8-12 oz. hummus

## Materials

### At Each Student Cooking Station

Cutting boards or paper plates (one for each child)  
Plastic knives (one for each child)  
Small paper plates (one for each child)  
Small paper bowls (one for each child)  
4-5 cookie cutters  
Tablecloths (one for each table)

### At Teacher's Station

Knife  
Cutting board

### At Sink Area and for Clean Up

Sponge, dish soap, paper towels



### Before you start cooking:

Set up the students' tables for the cooking class. Wash the tables/desks, lay table cloths over them, put a cutting board and plastic knife at each student's place. Put one or two cookie cutters on each table.

## Steps with the Students

### Keep it clean

Ask students to wash their hands. Review proper hand washing techniques: Wet hands with clean water, add soap, rub hands together vigorously and scrub thoroughly. Rub hands with soap for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC's), rinse with clean water.

### Introduce the Ingredients

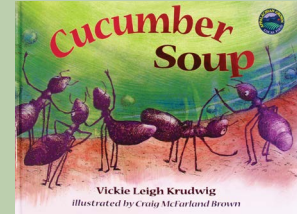
Write the list of ingredients on the board. Show students the ingredients in their whole form and point out which part we eat. This is your opportunity to tell the story of the vegetables in the recipe and to create buy-in from the kids to try them. For this recipe, tell the students interesting facts about cucumbers or recount a story or memory about eating cucumbers yourself. Show them a picture of the farmer who grew the cucumbers and tell them why cucumbers are good for us. Talk with them about how a cucumber plant grows (on a vine!) and what it needs to survive. Choose one or several of these ways to peak student's interest in the ingredients.

### Introduce the Equipment

Show students the tools they will use to make their cucumber stacks. Demonstrate the proper way to hold and handle the tools. Show students that both their pepper and their cucumber have a thick peel or skin on the outside of the vegetable. Demonstrate how to cut the vegetable with the peel side down towards the table (this enables the knife to easily cut through the vegetable).

## Literature Connections

*Cucumber Soup*  
by Vickie Leigh Krudwig



## Curriculum Connections

Use hands-on cooking classes as a mechanism for teaching curriculum concepts. A few ideas for activities to accompany the cucumber stacks recipe are:

1. After the cooking experience, guide students in writing and/or illustrating the steps of making a cucumber sandwich.
2. Read students *Cucumber Soup* and ask them to reflect on what the insects did to move the cucumber. What was the main idea in the story? Who were the characters?
3. Talk with students about the nutritional value of the ingredients. Ask them to identify several unhealthy snacks. Explain why cucumber stacks are a good food choice.
4. Looking at the list of the recipe ingredients written on the board, can the kindergartners spot their letters of the week? Can first and second grade students sound out the number of syllables in each of the ingredient words?

## Curriculum Alignment

Find a list of which Common Core State Standards and NC Essential Standards this lesson plan aligns with on the lesson plan page at [www.growing-minds.org](http://www.growing-minds.org).

## What's going to happen? Review the Steps with Students

Go over each of the steps of making the recipe, from washing the vegetables to trying the cucumber stacks (yes-trying it is a step!). **Write the steps on the board.**

**Step 1:** Wash the cucumbers.

**Step 2.** Using a plastic knife, cut the cucumbers into small pieces or slices. Put the vegetables into the small paper bowls.

**Step 3.** Press the cookie cutter into the slice of bread to make a shape.

**Step 4.** Using your plastic knife, spread hummus or cream cheese on top of the bread.

**Step 5.** Place pieces of cucumber on the hummus or cream cheese.

**Step 6.** Try it!

**Step 7.** Clean up.

## Get Them Cooking!

### Wash and Prepare the Ingredients

Wash and prepare the veggies! Choose several children to wash the cucumbers by running them under water (with a teacher's assistant or volunteer's help). Bring the cucumbers back to the teachers' cooking station and prep them in front of the class while talking a bit more about them. See preparation instructions in the ingredient list.

### Chopping, Shaping, Spreading

Ask students to take a seat at the tables/desks. Remind them that instructions for the recipe are on the board and they should refer to them if they have questions. Put a chunk of cucumber on each child's cutting board. Prompt students to start cutting the cucumbers using their plastic knives. Once the cucumbers are all cut into small pieces or slices, students can put them into their individual paper bowls. Next, students should gently press the cookie cutters into their slices of bread to make a shape. Students should then spread either cream cheese or hummus onto their slice of bread (give students a taste of each on a small piece of carrot if they are unsure which to choose). Top with the cucumber pieces. Enjoy!



## Last Steps

### Taste it!

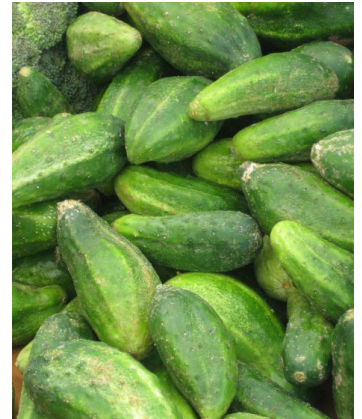
Give each child a small paper plate for their cucumber stack. Prompt the children to try their stacks together all at once (Give them a count down by saying, "One, two, three, try it!").

### Clean Up

Kids can help in the clean up process by putting their plates in the trash and helping to pick up debris on the floor. While you finish clean up, ask a volunteer to read the suggested books.

## Did you know. . .

Cucumbers are more than 90% water.



Cucumbers belong to the same botanical family as melons (including watermelon and cantaloupe) and squashes (including summer squash, winter squash, zucchini, and pumpkin).

Cucumbers are one of the oldest cultivated vegetables and have been grown in India for over 3,000 years!

## More Cucumber Activities

### What's inside?

Show students the cucumbers in their whole form and ask them to predict what they think the cucumbers will look like on the inside. What color will they be? Will they feel wet or dry? Will they have big seeds or little seeds? How many seeds are in a cucumber? Two, twenty, two hundred?!

### Make Cucumber Water

What do students think would happen if they put cucumber slices into water? Would the water take on the flavor of the cucumber? Would it be sweet, sour, or bitter? Have students cut two to three cucumbers into slices or chunks. Put the cucumbers into a water pitcher or jar with or without ice. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes. Have students taste the water. Which of their predictions were correct?