

Jeffrey Alford & Naomi Duguid's Spicy Cucumber Salad

By Genius Recipes

Here's a salad that you can eat right away -- with some grilled fish or lamb with cumin, perhaps -- or it can sit around in the fridge for a few days as a mellow pickle to snack on. Adapted very slightly from [Hot Sour Salty Sweet](#) by Jeffrey Alford & Naomi Duguid (Artisan Books, 2000).

Serves 4 as a salad or as one of many dishes in a rice meal

- 1 large or 2 medium European cucumbers
 - 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 2 tablespoons peanut or vegetable oil
 - 5 Thai dried chiles, or 3 for milder heat
 - 1/2 jalapeño, minced
 - 7 Sichuan peppercorns
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 cup packed torn cilantro leaves
1. Peel the cucumber, leaving some thin strips of peel on if you wish, for a decorative effect. Cut lengthwise into quarters and discard the seeds.
 2. Use the flat side of a cleaver or large knife to bash the cucumber pieces several times. Cut the pieces lengthwise into thinner strips, then cut crosswise into 2-inch lengths. Place in a medium bowl.
 3. In a small bowl, mix together the vinegar and sugar. Pour over the cucumber, mix well, and set aside.
 4. Place a wok or skillet over high heat. When it is hot, add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Toss in the dried chiles, jalapeño, and peppercorns and stir-fry for 20-30 seconds. Pour this over the cucumbers. Sprinkle on the salt and mix well.
 5. Mound the salad in a shallow bowl. Sprinkle on the cilantro leaves and serve immediately. Note: The traditional way to make this uses 3 tablespoons of oil, giving a well-oiled texture that may be undesirable. If you wish, try both and see which you prefer.