

Sweet and Crunchy Apple-Cucumber Salad

This refreshing Chinese-inspired salad combines the crispness of cucumbers and the sweetness of apples, tossed in a light sesame dressing. It's a vibrant side dish that adds a burst of flavor to any meal.



Side Dish

Chinese

10 min

Total time

Easy

Difficulty

150

kcal / serving

Nutrition per serving (estimated)

Protein 1 g

Carbs 23 g

Fat 6 g

Fiber 3 g · Sugar 17 g · Sodium 220 mg

Ingredients

- 1 medium apple, cored and diced
- 1 small cucumber, peeled and diced
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro or mint
- Salt and pepper to taste

Substitutions

Rice vinegar – Use an equal amount of apple cider vinegar for a similarly mild tang.

Soy sauce – Use an equal amount of tamari for a similar savory note.

Cilantro – Use the listed fresh mint in the same amount for a cooler, aromatic finish.

Honey – Use an equal amount of maple syrup, as listed, for comparable sweetness.

Drink pairing

A dry, lightly aromatic Riesling

Its bright acidity and gentle fruit complement the apple and sesame without overwhelming the cucumber.

0% option: Chilled jasmine tea

Steps

- 1 In a large bowl, combine the diced apple and cucumber.
- 2 In a small bowl, whisk together the sesame oil, rice vinegar, soy sauce, and honey (or maple syrup) until well blended.
- 3 Pour the dressing over the apple and cucumber mixture and toss gently to coat.
- 4 Add chopped cilantro or mint, and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 5 Serve immediately, or let it chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to enhance the flavors.

Chef's tips

- Choose a firm, crisp apple so the pieces stay distinct rather than turning soft in the dressing.
- Cut the apple and cucumber into similarly sized pieces for an even balance of sweetness and crunch.
- The salad is at its crispest freshly made; chilling softens the texture slightly while letting the dressing flavor develop.

Storage

Refrigerate leftovers promptly in a covered container and eat within 1 day for the best crunch. The apple may brown and the cucumber may release water as it sits.

Frequently asked questions

Can I make this salad ahead?

It can be made shortly ahead and chilled, but it is best served soon after mixing because the apple can brown and the cucumber can soften.

How can I tell if the dressing is balanced?

It should taste lightly savory, tangy, and sweet, with sesame aroma; adjust salt and pepper to taste without letting any one flavor dominate.

What can I serve this salad with?

Serve it as a crisp side alongside rice, noodles, or a savory main dish.