

## Hot and Sour Cucumbers

*Serve as a side dish to accompany a meal or as part of a banquet for 6-8*

4 medium-sized cucumbers, peeled  
1 teaspoon brown sugar  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1 cup brown rice vinegar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar, extra  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fish sauce  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 large red chilli, finely sliced on the diagonal  
1 teaspoon Sichuan pepper and salt  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon chilli oil

Cut cucumbers in half lengthways and scoop out the seeds using a spoon. Place cut-side down on a chopping board and slice on the diagonal into 2cm (1 in) pieces. Combine in a bowl with sugar and salt, mix well and leave to stand for 1 hour,

Meanwhile, combine vinegar and extra sugar in a small heavy-based saucepan and stir over heat until sugar dissolves. Simmer, uncovered and without stirring, for about 8 minutes, or until reduced by one-third and slightly syrupy – you should have about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. Set aside to cool.

Drain away any excess liquid from cucumbers. Add cooled vinegar syrup and remaining ingredients to pickled cucumbers and transfer to a serving bowl.

### Sichuan Pepper and Salt

1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns  
3 tablespoons sea salt

Dry-roast peppercorns and salt in a heavy-based pan. When the peppercorns begin to 'pop' and become aromatic, take off the heat. Allow to cool, then grind to a powder in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder.

(Makes 4 tablespoons; store in an airtight container.)

*NB: This dish should be served on the day of making.*

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