

Prep Time	15 minutes
Chill Time	20–30 minutes (optional but recommended)
Total Time	35–45 minutes
Skill Level	Beginner
Servings	4–6 side servings
Category	Salad / Side Dish
Cuisine	Mediterranean-American
Diet	Vegetarian, Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Vegan (if honey substituted)

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Ingredients

For the Salad

- 2 large English cucumbers (or 4-5 Persian cucumbers), about 1½ lbs — sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1½ lbs ripe tomatoes (Roma, beefsteak, or heirloom) — cut into ½-inch wedges or chunks
- ½ small red onion — very thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh dill, chopped (or ½ cup fresh parsley or basil)
- Optional: ½ cup crumbled feta cheese or ¼ cup Kalamata olives

For the Vinaigrette

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
- 1 teaspoon honey (or maple syrup for vegan)
- 1 small garlic clove — finely minced or grated

- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
 - ½ teaspoon kosher salt (plus more to taste)
 - ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional, for heat)
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Equipment

- Large mixing bowl
- Small bowl or jar with lid (for dressing)
- Sharp chef's knife and cutting board
- Colander
- Salad spinner or clean kitchen towel
- Serving spoon

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Cucumbers (3 minutes)

Wash the cucumbers thoroughly. If using English or Persian cucumbers, you can leave the skin on — it's thin and tender. If using standard garden cucumbers, peel them partially (leave some stripes of skin for color) and slice them in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to gently scrape out the watery seeds, which helps prevent a soggy salad.

Slice the cucumbers into ¼-inch half-moons or rounds. Place them in a colander, sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and let them drain while you prepare the other ingredients. This quick salting draws out excess water and keeps the salad crisp.

Step 2: Prepare the Tomatoes (3 minutes)

Core the tomatoes and cut them into ½-inch wedges or bite-sized chunks. If using cherry or grape tomatoes, simply halve them. Place them in the large mixing bowl. Save any tomato juice that collects on the cutting board — it adds flavor to the dressing.

Step 3: Slice the Onion (2 minutes)

Peel the red onion, cut it in half through the root, and slice it as thinly as possible. For a milder flavor, soak the slices in cold water for 5 minutes, then drain and pat dry. Add to the bowl with the tomatoes.

Step 4: Make the Vinaigrette (3 minutes)

In a small bowl or jar, combine the olive oil, red wine vinegar, honey, minced garlic, Dijon mustard, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes (if using). Whisk vigorously or shake with the lid on until the dressing is emulsified and slightly thickened. Taste and adjust: add more vinegar for brightness, more honey for sweetness, or more salt to wake up the flavors.

Step 5: Combine the Salad (3 minutes)

Pat the drained cucumbers dry with a clean kitchen towel or paper towels. Add them to the bowl with the tomatoes and onions. Pour the vinaigrette over the vegetables and toss gently with a large spoon until everything is evenly coated.

Step 6: Add the Herbs (1 minute)

Fold in the chopped fresh dill (or parsley/basil), reserving a small pinch for garnish. If using feta or olives, add them now and toss lightly.

Step 7: Chill and Marinate (20-30 minutes)

Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes, ideally 30. This resting time allows the flavors to meld and the vegetables to absorb the dressing. If you're short on time, you can serve it immediately — it will still be delicious — but the flavor deepens noticeably with a short chill.

Step 8: Serve (1 minute)

Give the salad one final gentle toss, taste for seasoning, and transfer to a serving bowl. Garnish with reserved herbs and a crack of black pepper. Serve cold or at cool room temperature.

Time & Intensity Breakdown

Phase	Time	Intensity
Prep (cucumbers, tomatoes, onion)	8 min	Low — simple chopping
Dressing	3 min	Low — whisking
Tossing & herbs	4 min	Low
Chilling	20-30 min	None — hands-off

	Phase	Time	Intensity
Total Active Time		~15 min	Easy / Beginner

Intensity Notes:

- Physical effort: Minimal — light chopping and stirring.
- Attention needed: Low — forgiving recipe; no precise timing required.
- Multitasking: Easy — you can prep vegetables while the cucumbers drain.
- Heat/cooking: None — no stove or oven required.
- Cleanup: Moderate — one large bowl, one small bowl, cutting board, knife.

Last of the Recipe: Storage & Make-Ahead Tips

This salad is best enjoyed within 24 hours, though it will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 days in an airtight container. After that, the cucumbers begin to soften and the tomatoes break down.

To store: Transfer leftovers to a sealed container and refrigerate. Before serving again, drain any excess liquid that has accumulated at the bottom of the bowl, and give it a fresh squeeze of lemon or a splash of vinegar to brighten the flavor.

Make-ahead tips:

- Chop the vegetables up to 8 hours ahead and store separately in the fridge. Combine with dressing just before serving for the crispest result.
- The vinaigrette can be made up to 5 days in advance and stored in a jar in the refrigerator. Shake well before using.
- For potlucks and picnics, keep the salad chilled until serving and place the bowl in an ice bath if it will sit out for more than an hour.

Flavor variations:

- Greek style: Add feta, Kalamata olives, and oregano.
 - Italian style: Swap dill for basil and add torn mozzarella.
 - Spicy: Add sliced jalapeño and a squeeze of lime.
 - Creamy: Stir in 2 tablespoons of Greek yogurt or sour cream into the dressing.
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Nutrition Information

Per serving (based on 6 servings, without optional feta or olives)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~95 kcal
Total Fat	7 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Trans Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	~200 mg
Total Carbohydrates	8 g
Dietary Fiber	2 g
Total Sugars	5 g
Added Sugars	1 g (from honey)
Protein	1.5 g
Vitamin C	~25% DV
Vitamin A	~15% DV
Vitamin K	~20% DV
Potassium	~350 mg
Calcium	~2% DV
Iron	~3% DV