



CULINARY  
INSTITUTE OF  
CHILD NUTRITION

# CULINARY QUICK BITES

KNIFE SKILLS: HOW TO SCORE AND CUT  
CUCUMBERS



# **CULINARY QUICK BITES**

## **KNIFE SKILLS: HOW TO SCORE AND CUT CUCUMBERS**

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Key Area: 2 – Operations

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# TRAINING OVERVIEW

The Culinary Quick Bites training series is a tool to help child nutrition professionals develop and refine their culinary skills. Each lesson is designed to last approximately fifteen minutes. Each lesson should be facilitated (led) by the person responsible for overseeing food production at a meal site, service area, or at the district level.

Training facilitators should review the training, in its entirety, prior to conducting the training.

This training has been developed to address a variety of learning styles. The training includes an overview of the topic that will be presented by the facilitator, an infographic to reinforce the training topic visually, a video to demonstrate the topic, and an activity to reinforce learning.

Please contact the Institute of Child Nutrition Help Desk at 1-800-321-3054 or [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org) if you have any questions about how best to facilitate this training.

## KEY AREA

Key Area: 2 – Operations

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

### FOOD PRODUCTION – 2100

Employee will be able to effectively utilize food preparation principles, production records, kitchen equipment, and food crediting to prepare foods from standardized recipes, including those for special diets.

2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

## FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This training counts for 15 minutes of training credit under USDA Professional Standards learning objective 2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

The activity at the end of this lesson involves scoring and cutting cucumbers. This activity helps reinforce knowledge and skills learned during this lesson. The cucumbers prepared during this lesson may be used in the next day's menu production.

Before the training, prepare for the lesson activity and set up the kitchen workstation as described on page 11.

Deliver the lesson/training to participants:

- Read the lesson overview to the participants.
- Discuss the infographic and how it relates to the training topic.
- View the instruction video with participants.
- Answer any questions participants may have on the lesson, infographic, and video.

Complete the activity as instructed on page 12.

## MATERIALS NEEDED



- Anti-slip mat – 1 per person
- Cutting board – 1 per person
- Chef knife – 1 per person
- Washed cucumber – at least 1 per person
- Waste pan – as needed
- Food pan – as needed
- Fork – 1 per person
- Infographic: How to Score and Cut A Cucumber – 1 per person
- Access to a screen to show the training video. Possible options include:
  - Site computer monitor with sound
  - Projector with sound
  - Tablets and smartphones
    - A QR code has been provided for quick access to the video on handheld devices.

# LESSON OVERVIEW

## OBJECTIVE:

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to demonstrate how to cut and score cucumbers.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT CUCUMBERS

- The cucumber plant is native to India and has been cultivated for more than 3,000 years.
- Although typically considered a vegetable because of how it is used in the culinary world, botanically it is a fruit.
- There are three main varieties of cucumber—slicing, pickling, and burpless/seedless.
- Slicing cucumbers are usually larger and have thicker skins, while pickling cucumbers are usually smaller and have thinner skins.
- Cucumbers are 90%–95% water.
- Cucumbers have several health benefits as they are packed with nutrients, including B vitamins, vitamin K, and the mineral potassium.

## SCORING

- Scoring consists of cutting shallow lines. Cucumber skin can have a slightly bitter taste that may overwhelm the mellow flavor of the flesh. Removing some skin helps you retain some of the flavor and vitamins found in it without drowning out the mild cucumber taste.

## USES

- Cucumbers can be used in a variety of ways:
  - Freshly sliced
  - Great for dipping
  - In salads
  - On sandwiches and wraps
  - Pickled

## HOW TO SCORE AND CUT A CUCUMBER

- Utilizing the infographic, review the process for scoring and cutting a cucumber.
- Review the embedded training video.

***After we review the infographic and video, there will be an activity to reinforce skills learned.***



## Culinary Quick Bites KNIFE SKILLS

## HOW TO SCORE AND CUT A CUCUMBER

1



After washing and drying the cucumber thoroughly, take a fork or channel knife and begin scoring your cucumber. To do this with a channel knife, place the knife at one of the tips of the cucumber and exert enough pressure to puncture the skin of the gourd.

2



Then drag the channel knife to the opposite end. Repeat this process until you have scored the entire skin of the cucumber all the way around.

3



When using a fork, insert the fork at one of the tips of the cucumber and pull the fork to the opposite end. Repeat the action 5-6 times.

4



Once the cucumber has been scored all around, select one end of the cucumber and place the sharp end of the knife somewhere between 1/8 of an inch and 1/4 of an inch, and cut down. Repeat this process until you have cut as many cucumber slices as you would like.



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## How to Score and Cut a Cucumber

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

<https://vimeo.com/854357166/420c089b11>

### QR CODE

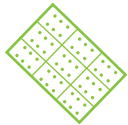
Utilize the QR code embedded to the right to share the video with staff utilizing handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets. Use the photo app on the smart device to scan the code to be directed to the video.



# ACTIVITY

## SETUP

### MATERIALS:



Anti-slip mat  
– 1 per person



Washed cucumber  
– at least 1 per person



Fork  
– 1 per person



Cutting board  
– 1 per person



Waste pan  
– as needed



Infographic: How  
to Score and Cut  
A Cucumber  
– 1 per person



Chef knife  
– 1 per person



Food pan  
– as needed

**NOTE:** If your site does not have enough materials for all participants to complete the activity simultaneously, divide participants into groups based on your materials. Allow enough time for each participant to complete the activity.

## SETUP INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATOR

- 1** Prior to the training, gather all of the materials needed for the activity. Pre-wash the cucumbers that will be used for the training. Set up a workstation for each participant with an anti-slip mat, cutting board, chef knife, and a cucumber.
- 2** During the activity, remember to monitor and observe staff as they practice their culinary skills.

# ACTIVITY

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 1** Refer the participants to the infographic. Then read the instructions for the activity. Ask the participants if there are any questions before beginning the activity.
- 2** Instruct all participants to wash their hands and put on single-use gloves before starting the activity.
- 3** Each participant will score and slice a cucumber.
  - Instruct participants to take their time and practice their cuts carefully.
  - Discard waste.

## POST ACTIVITY

- After completing the hands-on activity, recap the lesson with the participants. Offer an opportunity for participants to share their learning experience during the training and highlight any tips or takeaways they want to share with the group.
- If time allows, facilitate a discussion with the participants. Suggested discussion topics include:
  - Ask participants if they think cucumbers would be something their students would enjoy/accept.
  - Ask participants to discuss recipes with cucumbers that can benefit from scoring and cutting cucumbers.
- Ask if the participants feel more comfortable with scoring and cutting cucumbers or want more time to develop the skill further if time allows.
- Plan the next training session based on the needs of your staff.



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