

## Cool as a Cucumber

Hannah, My Sweet Vegan & Bittersweet Blog.- Inching closer and closer to the dreaded return of exams and essays, August swoops down upon me like a bird of prey. Just a couple weeks of freedom are left for me, can you believe it? Zipping straight through a year that should have only just begun, it took all this time to feel at home in such conditions and now this uncooperative season wishes to dump me upside down on my head again. Being accustomed to daily berry pickings, yielding multiple plastic containers piled to the brim with red rubies, it's hard to watch as my seemingly endless supply of wild raspberries are finally beginning to dwindle. Looking frantically for a decent punnet of strawberries, even those most common finds are beginning to look a bit lack-luster. The signs are undeniable, and yet I can't even remember when this "summer vacation" even began. Sure, the weather has played its part all this time, chasing me away from the thought of heating up the kitchen with threats of sweat, burns, and dreadfully frizzy hair. Can't go outside but I'll bake inside even if the oven isn't on - What's a hot, hungry vegan to do?

No, soup is certainly not a crazy way to revel in the craziness of a tumultuous and ever-changing summer! Cold soup is where it's at, as anyone who knows how to keep cool would tell you. The options are endless and easily adjusted to the crazy, unpredictable harvest. Of course there's the simple but satisfying gazpacho that everyone always enjoys, but what if you're looking for sweeter fare? Something to stave away the midday munchies that won't make you work up a sweat or weigh you down? The secret was right in front of my nose all along, or should I say, my hands! Buying cucumber melon hand lotion for the umpteenth time, I began to wonder what it might actually taste like, imagining a refreshing pool of fruity water. Perhaps such an idea actually had merit, I mused as all the ingredients sat readily on the shelves, requiring no more than a bit of reconstructing to complete the dish.

To make this simple dish, all you need to do is peel and chop one large seedless cucumber, gut and chop one honeydew melon, and throw all of the flesh into your food processor. Add in about 1 - 1 1/2 cups of almond milk, depending on how thick or thin you like it, and if your fruit isn't terribly sweet you could also incorporate a dollop or two of agave nectar. Ladle the soup into 2 - 4 bowls and garnish with balls of watermelon, carved out with a melon baller from as much watermelon as you want (although I highly suggest that you don't skimp, as the watermelon "dumplings" are a wonderful treat!) If you want to skip the fancy stuff and just cut it into chunks then go ahead, I won't tell.

Even if the humidity is relentless, this light, sweet and refreshing midday snack still makes me wish that summer could last forever. Hannah Kaminsky is the author of the indulgent dessert cookbook, My Sweet Vegan. She also keeps a personal blog of crafts, baking and photography at Bittersweet Blog.