

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**Cool Salads for Hot Days**  
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It's the height of summer and produce is abundant with hot weather favorites like cucumbers, tomatoes and melons. These are the makings of cool salads for the hot days of summer.

We normally think of green salads with tomatoes or cucumbers chopped up in them or we think of melon balls in a fancy container carved from the watermelon. But some of my favorite summer salads are marinated salads. Of course the classic marinated summer salad is tomatoes and cucumbers. I love these two together with some bottled Italian salad dressing and a sprinkle of salt. It's refreshing and simple. Another version of this adds watermelon to the mix and a vinaigrette of red wine vinegar and sugar. I know it sounds a little strange with tomatoes and watermelon together but trust me and just try it - it's summer in a bowl!



A sweeter feature is a cucumber, cantaloupe and watermelon salad with a Honey Lime Vinaigrette. It's another mash up of fruits and vegetables together. Cucumbers and melons are actually from the same family and their flavors marry really well. The lime from the dressing adds a refreshing acidity that makes it a perfect summer salad.

These marinated salads are great for potlucks and picnics during the summer. They make a big bowl full to go all around at a potluck and pack well in jars or plastic ware for picnics. They're also very colorful and pretty to accompany grilled meats, burgers or fried catfish. You can cut up your produce the night before and make the dressing but keep them separate until just a little while before serving—otherwise they draw a lot of extra juice out of the fruit and vegetables that waters down the dressing.



So try a marinated salad with all the good fruits and vegetables this summer and cool down on hot days. For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)) and click on Seasonal Eating.

**Cucumber and Melon Salad with Honey Lime Vinaigrette**

- 2 cucumbers, peeled, cut into quarters lengthwise and sliced
- 1/2 cantaloupe melon, cut from rind and cubed
- 2 cups cubed seedless watermelon
- 1/4 cup honey

Juice from 2 limes  
Zest from 1 lime  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

In a large bowl, stir together the cucumbers, cantaloupe and watermelon. In a medium bowl, whisk together the honey, lime juice and lime zest. Drizzle in the olive oil while whisking and season with salt and pepper. Pour dressing over fruit, stir to coat and let stand 30 minutes before serving.

### **Tomato, Cucumber and Watermelon Salad**

1/4 cup red wine vinegar  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt, divided  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1/2 cup olive oil  
3 cups watermelon chunks  
3 cups chopped heirloom tomatoes  
3 cups chopped cucumbers  
1/2 cup chopped red onion  
1 cup chopped basil  
3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese

In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, 3/4 teaspoon salt, pepper, sugar and oil. Add watermelon, tomatoes, cucumbers and red onion. Toss to coat and let stand 15 minutes. Add remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt and basil and stir to mix. Place in serving bowls and top with feta.