

Shopper's Guide

Selection



Choose red or reddish-orange tomatoes that "give" very slightly to gentle pressure. Do not buy bruised, soft or moldy tomatoes.



Storage

When storing tomatoes at home, do not refrigerate them; room temperature is best. If tomatoes are not fully ripe, place the tomatoes in paper bag with an apple or banana. Do not ripen tomatoes in direct sunlight, because even though the skin is red, the tomatoes will not be ripe and flavorful inside.

Preparation

Peeling fresh tomatoes is not necessary, although some cooks prefer it. To peel fresh tomatoes, dip them in boiling water for about 30 seconds or until skins split. Remove with slotted spoon and dip in cold water. The skins will come off easily.

Why Tomatoes are Tops!

FLAVOR

Tomatoes add color, flavor, and texture to your favorite sandwich, salad, or omelet

RICH IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Tomatoes are high in Vitamin C and are a source of beta carotene, potassium, folic acid, iron, and fiber.

EASY TO USE

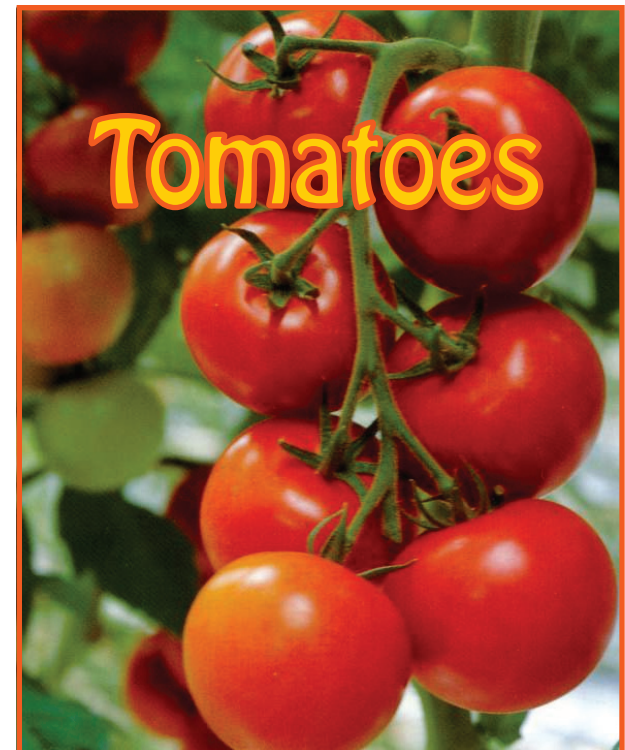
Tomatoes combine well with about any type of food, such as, poultry, fish, rice, pasta, as well as other vegetables. Tomatoes make an excellent base for homemade soups or sauces and go especially well with pasta dishes.



This material was adapted from PA Nutrition Education Network, www.panen.org.

This material was developed and provided by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program with funding from USDA'S Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. It can help you to buy nutritious food and stretch your food dollars. For more information, call 1-866-950-3663.

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IS IT A FRUIT OR A VEGETABLE?

A tomato is actually a fruit! A fruit is considered the edible part of a plant that contains the seeds. A vegetable has edible stems, leaves and roots of a plant.

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Zesty Italian Tomatoes

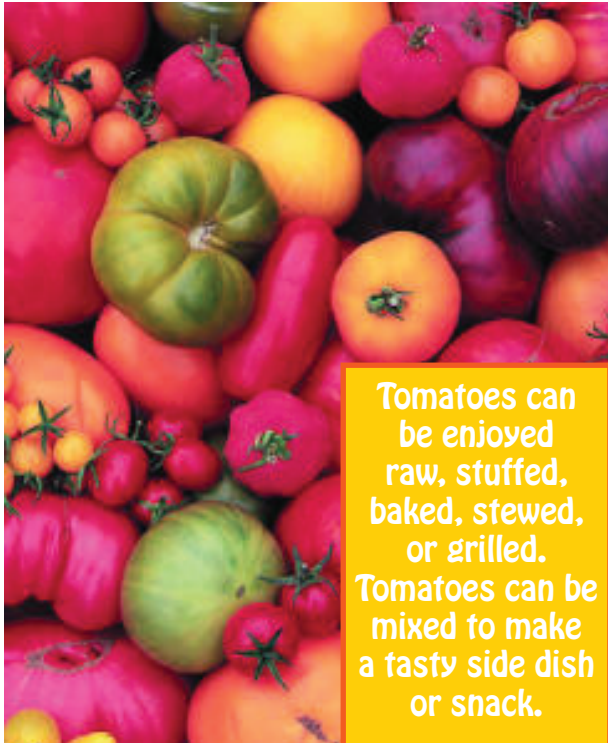
- 3-4 fresh tomatoes
- 8 fresh basil leaves, sliced into ribbons
- 2-3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Stir all ingredients in a bowl and serve with crusty Italian bread, over pasta, or as a topping for pizza.

TIPS

☆ Slice basil at last minute so that it stays green.

☆ If you don't have fresh basil you can use dried basil or Italian seasoning.



Tomatoes can be enjoyed raw, stuffed, baked, stewed, or grilled. Tomatoes can be mixed to make a tasty side dish or snack.



Tomatoes are a very good source of vitamins A, C, and K and potassium. They are also a good source of lycopene a key nutrient that is associated with lowering cancer risk for certain types of cancer.

Gazpacho Soup

- 4 cups tomato juice, cold
- 2 cups tomatoes, fresh, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 cup green pepper, chopped fine
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped fresh
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Dash Tabasco sauce
- Juice of 1/2 lemon + 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon tarragon
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin, ground

1. Wash and prepare all vegetables
2. Combine all ingredients and chill for at least 2 hours. (If desired puree in blender or food processor.)

TIP

☆ Freeze soup in individual containers for future lunches.

Garden Fresh Tomato Sauce



Makes 4 servings

- 3 cups chopped tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp onion powder
- 1/4 tsp dried basil (or 2 fresh basil leaves, chopped)
- 1/4 tsp dried oregano (or 2 stems fresh oregano, chopped)
- 1/4 tsp dried parsley (or 2 stems fresh parsley, chopped)
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp fennel seed (optional)

1. In a saucepan, combine all ingredients.
2. Simmer on medium heat for 15 minutes or until tomatoes are soft. Serve over cooked pasta.

VARIATIONS USING SAUCE

To make a minestrone: Add 2 cups of chicken broth, 1 cup of cooked macaroni, 1 cup of any vegetable or left-over vegetables such as cooked and diced carrots, green beans, celery and turn your sauce into a meal.

To make chili: Add 1/2 pound of cooked lean ground meat, 1 cup of pinto beans, 1 tsp of chili powder, 1/4 tsp cumin and one dash of Tabasco sauce. Makes 4 servings