

Tomatoes

Tomatoes originated in the New World as small berries, and have been bred over a very long time to bring an amazing diversity of colors, tastes, and textures to our tables. The red color of tomatoes comes from Lycopene, a very powerful anti-oxidant.



TIPS:

Short-term Storage: We are working on picking tomatoes before they're fully ripe so by the time you get to eating them they are just getting ripe, not getting over-ripe. For tomatoes which haven't fully colored yet, you should leave them in a paper bag on the counter to finish ripening. If you get fully ripe tomatoes, you need to either eat them immediately (within a day or two), or put them in a cool spot. Refrigeration can cause the flavors of tomatoes to change and become less than ideal, but it is better to store them in the fridge before letting them over-ripen and rot. Over-ripe tomatoes can be used in any cooked tomato recipe (sauces especially). If you have a tomato that's over-ripe, either make a sauce out of it and refrigerate for up to a few days.

Long-term Storage: Look at books on canning and preserving. Otherwise, freeze whole tomatoes in bags, or make sauce and freeze it. When you have an over-ripe tomato, freezing it is the perfect quick solution.

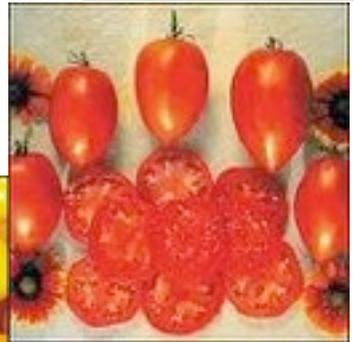
General Cooking Info: Raw tomatoes, with a little salt makes a great snack. Juice them. Make fresh sauces.

Growing info: Tomato plants are very robust plants as long as there are a few requirements met. First, it should be above 50 degrees at all times, or they'll get stressed out. Second, it should be pretty dry weather, otherwise, they'll develop a myriad of fungal and bacterial diseases which can ravage a crop if the conditions are right. Third, the soil should be fertile. And fourth, they should be allowed to grow without interruption. All of this means that we spend a lot of time with tomatoes. We start them in tiny pots in March, and transplant them 2 times into successively larger pots and then once more into the ground. We make sure the soil is very fertile and healthy before planting them out. We trellis them so they don't touch the ground where tomato diseases abound. When late blight conditions exist, we spray copper on the leaves as a preventative (a method that is organically approved). And of course we try to keep up with picking when peak season comes around in August.

Common Problems: We have fungal disease issues when the weather stays cool and wet. It is very hard to control these diseases once you have them. The only thing we can do is minimize soil splash on the leaves.



Clockwise from left: Striped German, Pink Brandywine, Green Zebra, Paul Robeson, Valencia, Amish Paste, Yellow Pear Cherry, Sungold Cherry. Just a few of the many we grow!



Below are common cosmetic problems with heirlooms. From Left: Green shoulders, Cat-facing, Cracked Shoulders. They may look ugly, but they taste beautiful!



Fresh Tomato Salsa Recipe

2-3 medium sized fresh tomatoes (from 1 lb to 1 1/2 lb), stems removed, finely diced
 1/2 red onion, finely diced
 1 jalapeño chili pepper (stems, ribs, seeds removed), finely diced
 1 serano chili pepper (stems, ribs, seeds removed), finely diced
 Juice of one lime
 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
 Salt and pepper to taste
 Optional: oregano and or cumin to taste

1 Start with chopping up 2 medium sized fresh tomatoes. Prepare the chilies. Be very careful while handling these hot peppers. If you can, avoid touching them with your hands. Use a fork to cut up the chilies over a small plate, or use a paper towel to protect your hands. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after handling and avoid touching your eyes for several hours. Set aside some of the seeds from the peppers. If the salsa isn't hot enough, you can add a few for heat.

2 Combine all of the ingredients in a medium sized bowl. Taste. If the chilies make the salsa too hot, add some more chopped tomato. If not hot enough, carefully add a few of the seeds from the chilies, or add some ground cumin.

Let sit for an hour for the flavors to combine. Makes approximately 3-4 cups.

Serve with chips, tortillas, tacos, burritos, tostadas, quesadillas, pinto or black beans.

from Simplyrecipes.com

Simple Tomato Sauce

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 1 small onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 1 stalk celery, chopped
 1 carrot, chopped
 Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
 2 (32-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
 4 to 6 basil leaves
 2 dried bay leaves
 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, optional

In a large casserole pot, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onion and garlic and saute until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes. Add celery and carrots and season with salt and pepper. Saute until all the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, basil, and bay leaves and simmer covered on low heat for 1 hour or until thick. Remove bay leaves and check for seasoning. If sauce still tastes acidic, add unsalted butter, 1 tablespoon at a time to round out the flavors.

Add half the tomato sauce into the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth. Continue with remaining tomato sauce.

If not using all the sauce, allow it to cool completely and pour 1 to 2 cup portions into freezer plastic bags. This will freeze up to 6 months.

from Chef Giada De Laurentiis

Round Hill's Tomato Basil Tart

1 unbaked pie crust
 1 and 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella
 5 roma tomatoes
 1 cup loosely packed basil leaves
 4 cloves garlic
 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
 1/2 cup mayonnaise
 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper

pie crust:

1. flute edge with fork and bake pie crust to instructions
2. remove from oven and sprinkle with 1/2 cup of mozzarella cheese
3. cool in pie crust

filling:

1. cut tomatoes into wedges and drain with paper towels
2. arrange tomatoes in pie shell accordingly
3. in food processor, combine basil & garlic, blend until coarsely chopped

4. sprinkle over tomatoes in pie crust
5. combine remaining cheeses, mayonnaise, and pepper
6. spread evenly over the basil mixture
7. bake at 375 for 35 to 40 minutes or until top is golden and bubbly

Tiered Tomato Soup



Ingredients

- 2 pounds ripe tomatoes
- 3 to 4 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- Salt
- 2 firm-ripe avocados (8 oz. each)
- 3/4 cup fat-skimmed chicken broth
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 cucumber (12 oz.)
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon

Preparation

1. Rinse and core tomatoes; cut into chunks. Whirl in a blender or food processor until smooth, then rub through a fine strainer into a bowl; you should have about 3 cups. Discard residue. Season purée to taste with 2 to 3 tablespoons vinegar and salt.

Cover and chill until cold, at least 1 hour.

2. Peel and pit avocados; cut into chunks. In a blender or food processor, whirl avocados, broth, sour cream, and lime juice until smooth. Add salt to taste. Cover surface with plastic wrap and chill until cold, at least 1 hour.

3. Peel cucumber; cut in half lengthwise and scoop out and discard seeds. Dice cucumber into 1/8-inch pieces; you should have about 1 cup. In a small bowl, mix cucumber, shallots, 1 tablespoon vinegar, and minced tarragon. Cover and chill until cold, at least 30 minutes.

4. To serve, stir avocado mixture to blend and pour equal portions into glasses (12 to 16 oz. each). Whisk tomato mixture to blend and gently pour over avocado. Top with diced-cucumber mixture. Clear, straight-sided glasses or wineglasses show off the layers of color best, but large martini glasses also work. You can also use soup bowls and keep the layers a surprise.

Mozzarella, Cherry Tomato and Basil Skewers

- 1 clove garlic, smashed
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

- 12 bocconcini (small mozzarella balls), about 8 ounces
- 1 pint mixed red and yellow cherry or pear tomatoes
- 12 basil leaves, preferably large
- 12 (6-inch) wooden skewers

Combine the garlic, salt, pepper flakes, and olive oil in a medium glass bowl. Cover and microwave on high until the garlic is golden, about 2 minutes. Cool. Add the bocconcini and refrigerate for at least 1 and up to 24 hours.

Thread a yellow cherry tomato onto a skewer, wrap a bocconcini in a basil leaf and add to the skewer, then finish with a red tomato. For a dramatic presentation, use both pear and cherry tomatoes. Halve the top cherry tomato and use it as a stand for the skewer.

Repeat with the remaining cheese and tomatoes. Save the oil for a dipping sauce and serve with a small bowl of kosher salt.

from Foodnetwork.com

Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

- 2 pounds cherry tomatoes on the vine
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Directions
- Heat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Place the tomatoes on a sheet pan and drizzle over the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast until the tomatoes collapse, about 10 minutes.

from Foodnetwork.com

Cherry Tomato Salad

40 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup pitted and sliced green olives
1 (6 ounce) can black olives, drained and sliced
2 green onions, minced
3 ounces pine nuts
1/2 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon white sugar
1 teaspoon dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste

1. In a big bowl, combine cherry tomatoes, green olives, black olives, and spring onion.
2. In a dry skillet, toast pine nuts over medium heat until golden brown, turning frequently. Stir into tomato mixture.
3. In a small bowl, mix together olive oil, red wine vinegar, sugar, and oregano. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour over salad, and gently stir to coat. Chill for 1 hour.

from Allrecipes.com