

Farm to School: Highlighting Local Fruits & Vegetables



Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

— TOMATOES —



Considered the most commonly grown “vegetable” in home gardens, tomatoes are actually fruits because they are seed-bearing. There are a large variety of textures, colors, and flavors

of tomatoes for many different tastes. Most recently, hothouse or greenhouse tomato production has become popular and allows year-round production, even in northern climates.

History: Tomatoes are thought to originate in Peru. They were introduced in Europe in the 1500s and quickly became popular, called “the apple of love” in France and “the apple of paradise” in Germany. The tomato’s popularity in the United States is attributed to Thomas Jefferson who is said to have grown, pickled, stewed, and served tomatoes in a multitude of ways.

Botanical Facts: Tomatoes are part of the Solanaceae family, along with eggplants, peppers and potatoes.

Spotlight on....



◀ Indigo Rose



◀ Sungold



◀ Beefsteak

Tomato Varieties and Uses

USES	DESCRIPTION	COMMON RECIPES	COMMON VARIETIES
Slicing Tomatoes	Round and firm, balanced meaty and watery insides, often grown in greenhouses and referred to as hothouse tomatoes	Bruschetta, BLT, sandwiches, ratatouille	Rose de Berne, Beefsteak, Brandywine, Bush Early Girl
Paste Tomatoes	Common for sauces, meaty walls with few seeds	Tomato Sauce, soup	Roma, Amish Paste, Big Mama
Cherry Tomatoes	Range in size from a thumb tip to a golf ball	Eating fresh, salad	Sungold, Yellow Pear, Peacevine

More about.. TOMATOES

More Facts



- The name tomato comes from the Aztec word “xitomatl”.
- Until the mid-1700’s, tomatoes were believed to be poisonous in Britain.
- While the tomato fruit is safe and healthful, the leaves are toxic.
- The average American eats 22-24 lbs. of tomatoes per year.
- All 50 states produce tomatoes commercially.
- The largest international tomato producers are China, USA, Turkey, India and Egypt.

Preparing & Cooking Tomatoes

- Rinse tomatoes and pat dry. Remove stem and halve, cube, or slice as desired.
- To remove skins, de-stem tomatoes and then blanch in boiling water for about 2 minutes until the skin begins to peel. Run under cool water and peel. They can also be de-seeded at this time.
- Tomatoes are delicious roasted. Slice large tomatoes such as Hot House or smaller tomatoes such as Grape or Cherry.



See **RECIPES** section on our website for recipe ideas

Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Put tomatoes under the broiler for about 5-8 minutes or roast them for about 10 minutes.

Nutrition Facts

Tomatoes are rich in Vitamins A and C, fiber, potassium, beta carotene and lycopene. Lycopene is thought to help prevent cancer, especially prostate, and becomes more available for use by the body through cooked tomatoes.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 medium tomato (148g)			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0		
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 0g	0%		
Saturated Fat 0g	0%		
Trans Fat 0g	0%		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%		
Sodium 20mg	1%		
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%		
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%		
Sugars 3g			
Protein 1g			
Vitamin A 20%	Vitamin C 40%		
Calcium 2%	Iron 4%		
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat	9	Carbohydrate	4
		Protein	4

Storage

Tomatoes should be stored in a cool dark place and in the refrigerator once cut. They are perishable and best eaten raw during peak freshness but can be processed into salsa or sauce once they have over-ripened.