



Tomatoes

Tomatoes are actually fruits, but most people eat them like vegetables. Illinois-grown tomatoes are at their prime July through September.

Tomatoes Are Good for You

Tomatoes are ...

- a good source of vitamins A & C
- low in calories and sodium.

How to Buy Tomatoes

- Choose red or reddish-orange tomatoes that “give” very slightly to gentle pressure.
- Do not buy bruised, soft or moldy tomatoes.
- One pound equals . . .
 - 2 cups chopped
 - 3 medium tomatoes.

How to Store Tomatoes

- Handle gently to avoid bruising.
- If tomatoes need to ripen, place them in a loosely closed paper bag at room temperature. Check daily.
- If a tomato develops any mold, throw it away.
- When tomatoes are ripe, they can be served immediately, or stored in the refrigerator. Ripe tomatoes will usually keep 2 to 3 days under refrigeration. For best flavor, bring tomatoes to room temperature before serving.

How to Use Tomatoes

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



- **To Slice**
Use a serrated knife. Slice tomatoes lengthwise, rather than crosswise, to retain juice.
- **To Stuff**
Cut crosswise and scoop out seeds and juice. Fill tomato with cottage cheese or chicken, tuna, or egg salad. Sprinkle paprika on top.
- **To Bake**
Cut crosswise, sprinkle, with Parmesan cheese and season as desired. Bake on a baking sheet at 425°F. for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Besides adding fresh sliced or chopped tomatoes to salads, try adding them to these dishes, just before serving.
 - nachos
 - burritos
 - spaghetti
 - scrambled eggs
 - pizza
 - chili
 - macaroni and cheese
- Children may find eating cherry tomatoes fun. Quarter them to reduce risk of choking.

This information provided by U of I Extension
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Tomato Recipes

Garden Veggies Italian Style

Serves 6

1 onion chopped
1 summer squash, diced (yellow or zucchini)
1 tomato, diced
1 green pepper, chopped
1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
1 pinch of oregano
½ cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

Calories: 60 per serving
Fat: 2 grams per serving

Directions:

Combine vegetables in a baking dish. Sprinkle with oregano. Pour on tomato sauce. Bake uncovered at 350°F. for 20 to 30 minutes. Top with cheese and bake another 4 to 5 minutes until cheese is melted.

Sliced Tomato Antipasto

Serves 2

1 medium tomato
1-2 ounces mozzarella cheese
½ tsp. basil or oregano
Black pepper
1 Tbsp. light Italian dressing

Calories: 126 per serving
Fat: 8 grams per serving

Directions:

Slice tomatoes, and top with thinly sliced mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle with basil or oregano and black pepper. Drizzle with dressing.

Salsa Ranchero

Makes 2½ cups

1 pound fresh tomatoes (about 3 medium)
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 tsp. minced garlic (or ½ tsp. garlic powder)
1 to 2 Tbsps. finely chopped jalapeno peppers (see note)
2 to 4 Tbsps. chopped fresh cilantro (or fresh parsley)
½ tsp. salt
Lime juice to taste (try a Tbsp. at a time)

Calories: 12 per ¼ cup serving
Fat: 0 grams per ¼ cup serving

Directions:

Cut tomatoes in half crosswise and remove seeds and juice. Finely chop the tomato pulp, and combine with the remaining ingredients. The salsa will have a “crisper” texture if made just before serving.



Note: Wash hands carefully, immediately after chopping hot chili peppers, as the juice will sting if it gets into eyes or cuts on hands.