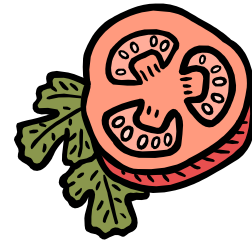


IT'S TOMATO TIME



GARDENING SEASON

Mid-July to October

CHOOSING TIPS

Look for well-formed tomatoes that are smooth and reasonably free from blemishes. A perfectly ripe tomato will be completely red, have a sweet subtle aroma and be firm but not hard. Use imperfect tomatoes in cooking, but check carefully and cut off:

- ⊕ Bruised areas
- ⊕ Green or yellow areas
- ⊕ Growth cracks
- ⊕ Water-soaked spots

STORAGE

Keep tomatoes at room temperature, away from dust and sunlight. Refrigerate only when overripe if you cannot use them immediately. Green tomatoes can be ripened by holding at room temperature, away from sunlight. To ripen more quickly, put them into a paper bag.

PREPARATION

Wash tomatoes in cold water and then cut out stem ends (do not cut out stem of cherry tomatoes). Tomatoes can be peeled if desired. The most common way of slicing tomatoes is crosswise. However, slicing vertically from the stem end to the blossom end also makes nice slices, with less loss of seeds and juice.

To Peel: Cut shallow crosses in the blossom ends. Lower tomatoes into boiling water for 15 to 30 seconds. Remove from hot water, and cool in cold water. The skin should peel off easily from the cut area using a knife.

SERVING IDEAS

Tomatoes are delicious served fresh in salads, on sandwiches, or eaten "as is." They can be stuffed, stewed, fried, baked and used in sauces, casseroles and soups.

KEY NUTRIENTS

- ⊕ Vitamin C for healthy gums, skin and blood.
- ⊕ Potassium to help maintain normal blood pressure.
- ⊕ Antioxidant lycopene which may prevent certain types of cancer.

RECIPES

Stuffed Tomato Salad

- 1 tomato
- 1 rounded tablespoon low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon green pepper, chopped

Cut off top of tomato (stem end) and remove seeds. Cut from top halfway down as if making wedges. Chop green peppers and mix with cottage cheese. Place mixture in tomato. Chill and serve. Serves 1; 40 Cal; 0.5 g fat.

Salsa

- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 4 ounce can green chiles, chopped
- 1 cup corn
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon each: chili powder and sugar
- ¼ teaspoon each: oregano and salt
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients. Cover tightly. Cook on stovetop (about 20 minutes) until boiling. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving. Serves 10; 25 Cal; <1 g fat.



Brought to you by Sherry Tanumihardjo, UW-Extension, and Jennifer Keeley, Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources, WI.

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