

Tomatoes

Remember the summers of yesteryear and all those goodies grandma's garden had to offer? Today, we can savor a bit of the good ol' days with these heritage tomatoes that are making a comeback in family gardens and local markets.

Whether hybrid or heirloom, tomatoes can be loosely divided into several categories: beefsteak, paste, medium-size and cherry.

Beefsteak

Beefsteak tomatoes are large, irregularly shaped tomatoes that are good for slicing as well as eating raw or cooked.

AUNT RUBY'S GERMAN GREEN:

Spicy and sweet, these juicy, large green tomatoes usually have a pink blush to them.



BRANDYWINE

A rich, juicy tomato with a slightly spicy flavor and firm flesh.

CHEROKEE PURPLE

A dusty pink tomato with a milk chocolate tint and a rich, smoky flavor said to be named after the Cherokee Indians, who originally grew them.

Paste

Paste tomatoes, also called Roma or Italian tomatoes, have an elongated shape and are great for cooking and making sauce and paste because when fully ripe they have fewer seeds and less

AMISH PASTE

A large (for its type) oblong-shaped tomato with a sweet flavor.



OLPAKA:

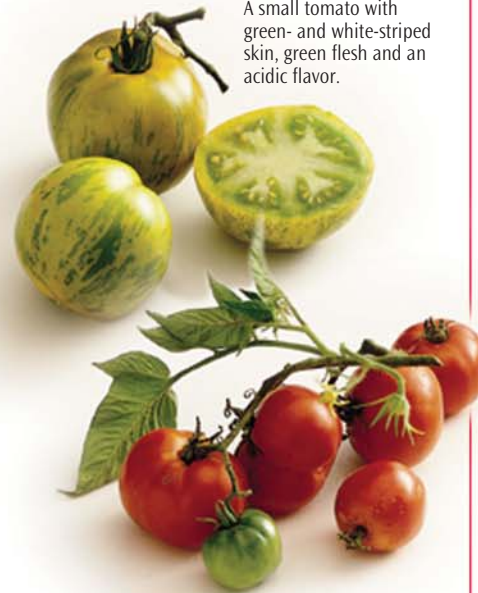
A red, chili-shaped tomato with a sweet-tangy flavor.

Medium-Size

Medium-size, or canning, tomatoes usually grow to about the size of a tennis ball. They are used in canning as well as being good slicing tomatoes.

GREEN ZEBRA:

A small tomato with green- and white-striped skin, green flesh and an acidic flavor.



STUPICE (STOO-PEECH-KA):

Deep red-skinned tomato from eastern Europe with a full-flavored flesh that is sweet and tangy. Try these roasted, too.

Cherry

Cherry tomatoes are small (about 1 inch), round tomatoes reminiscent of large cherries. They are wonderful tossed in salads or stir-fries, used as garnishes or

CURRANT

Tiny pea-size tomatoes with a sweet, fruity flavor. There are both red and yellow varieties.



YELLOW PEAR

Small pear-shaped tomatoes with a mild, sweet flavor. They're great for snacking. There is also a red variety.

Tomato Harvest



Storage

Never store tomatoes in the refrigerator. Once temperatures go below 50°F, the quality of tomatoes deteriorates with the pulp getting mushy and loss of flavor. Store at room temperature instead. You can speed ripening by placing underripe tomatoes in a brown paper bag and closing.



Peeling

To peel tomatoes, heat a large saucepan of water to boiling. Carefully place the tomatoes in the boiling water for 15 to 20 seconds. Transfer with a slotted spoon or tongs to cold water, then peel skins from the tomatoes.



Coring

To remove the core, cut a small circle around the stem end with a small



Seeding

To remove seeds, cut the tomato crosswise in half and gently squeeze or spoon seeds into a bowl. Although seeding a tomato may be beneficial to a recipe, remember that the seeds are the highest concentration of vitamin C and much of

Freezing

To freeze fresh tomatoes, peel, seed and chop them; do not drain. Place tomatoes in plastic containers or plastic freezer bags, and freeze up to three months. Use in recipes as you would canned tomatoes.



Roasting

To roast a tomato, insert a long-handled fork into the tomato. Hold it over a gas or charcoal grill, turning the tomato until it is charred on all sides. Let the tomato become cool enough to handle, then remove the skin.





Tomatoes

Nutrition Highlights

- Vitamin C (The highest concentration is in the jellylike substance surrounding the seeds.)
- Beta-carotene
- Folate
- Potassium
- Lycopene and other phytonutrients

The discovery of lycopene and what seems to be its remarkable impact on health has made tomatoes a nutritional darling. Lycopene is credited for many of the potential benefits attributed to tomatoes, but it may be an interaction among all the nutrients



Health Highlights

- Reduced risk of cancer, including prostate, lung and digestive cancers.
- Lower risk of heart disease (may reduce blood clotting, blood pressure and artery-clogging LDLs).
- Early research suggests a lycopene link to neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's and Alzheimer's. Its antioxidant action may have a protective effect against these conditions.

Adding tomatoes to your table

- Dip vegetables and chips into salsa instead of creamy-style dips.
- Add sliced tomatoes to grilled sandwiches.
- Make a salad of tomato, cucumber, zucchini and corn.
- Top pasta with tomatoes, fresh basil, olive oil and cracked pepper.
- Stuff a tomato with tuna or chicken salad.
- Add grape tomatoes to the snack menu.

Check out the following recipes using fresh tomatoes:

Easy Chicken and Garden Veggies, p. 9

Turkey Pasta Primavera, p. 14

Cheeseburger Pasta Toss, p. 23

Pork Chops with Green Chile Corn, p. 28

Layered Chile-Chicken Enchilada Casserole, p. 49

Bacon Cheeseburger Pizza, p. 61

