



Tomato

Growing and Harvest Information

Tomatoes grow best when they receive full sunlight. Plant them away from trees and buildings and in a well-drained area. Ideal spacing for planting tomatoes is about 24 to 36 inches between each plant, with rows 4-5 feet apart. Tomatoes need lots of water to grow fruit so be sure to water plants frequently; they should receive 1-2 inches a week.

Staking tomato plants reduces chances of disease and makes harvesting easier. Stakes can be made from 6 foot long, 1-2" pieces of wood with one pointed end. Place it firmly into the ground about 4" from the plant when transplanting and use soft cord to attach plant to stake.

Harvesting should occur after tomato fruits have fully ripened but before they have softened.

Introduction

Tomatoes are high in vitamin C, an antioxidant that promotes healthy skin and gums, and helps the body to absorb iron. In the 1700's, the tomato was feared by Europeans because the acidic tomatoes leached lead from the pewter plates that wealthy aristocrats used, leading to many deaths (from the lead poisoning). But by 1897, in America, Joseph Campbell discovered how well tomatoes keep when canned and popularized condensed tomato soup.

Preparation & Storage

Storage:

- Do not store refrigerate tomatoes after harvesting. Flavor and quality are preserved best when held at room temperature.
- Refrigerate only when overripe if you cannot use them immediately. To ripen more quickly, put them into a paper bag.

Freezing:

- The first step is to blanch tomatoes: drop tomatoes into pot of boiling water for 60-90 seconds and then immediately place into ice-water bath to cool. The skin should remove easily.
- Remove the stems and cores of tomatoes
- Place tomatoes into ziploc bags and make sure bags are tightly sealed, removing as much air as possible.
- Store flat in freezer. Flavor will retain for 12 to 18 months.

Canning:

- Make sure to use new, updated recipes. The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good resource for recipes: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can3_tomato.html
- For more instruction on canning: <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/canning-tomato-products-safety-guidelines>

Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	EXCELLENT
Mineral	MODERATE
Fiber	MODERATE

Use By Guide

Fruit State	Use by
Raw (refrigerated)	7 days
Freezing	12-18 months
Home-Canned	1 year



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Fun Fact:

Tomatoes are an excellent source of the antioxidant lycopene, which is linked to prevents many forms of cancer.

Prepare Tomatoes Like This:

Baked	Roasted
Fresh	Stir-fry
Fried	Stuffed
Grilled	
Pureer	

Try Tomatoes In:

- Salads
- Salsas
- Sandwiches
- Sauces
- Pastas
- Pizzas
- Soups

Preparation

Recipe 1: Caprese Salad

Ingredients

- 6 medium, very ripe tomatoes, washed and cut into 1/4" slices
- 4 oz. fresh mozzarella, sliced into 1/4" slices
- Handful of fresh basil leaves
- 4 tbs. extra virgin olive oil or balsamic salad dressing

Directions

1. On a serving platter, layer tomatoes and mozzarella slices
2. Tear basil leaves into small pieces and use as topping
3. Drizzle oil/dressing on top and enjoy

Recipe 2: Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce

Ingredients

- 4 lbs. tomatoes, washed, seeded, and chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp oregano
- Handful fresh basil leaves, chopped or torn into small pieces
- Salt and pepper
- 1 lb. uncooked spaghetti

Directions

1. In a large pot, cook tomatoes and basil over medium-low heat until tomatoes are soft.
2. In separate skillet, saute onion and garlic in olive oil until onions are translucent.
3. Add onion mixture to tomato mixture, add salt and pepper.
4. Let simmer on low heat for two hours or until thick.
5. While waiting for sauce, prepare spaghetti according to package directions.
6. Top pasta with tomato sauce and enjoy.