

Vegetable of the Month

Tomatoes



Currently, tomatoes are one of the most popular vegetables eaten by Americans. Tomatoes are members of the fruit family, but they are served and prepared as a vegetable. This is why most people consider them a vegetable and not a fruit. They are high in vitamin C and also provide beta-carotene. The National Cancer Institute published a study that showed an association between consuming a diet rich in tomato-based foods and a decreased risk of prostate cancer.

Tomatoes contain large amounts of an antioxidant called lycopene, which may be responsible for this possible positive effect. Tomato paste and sauces contain a greater amount of lycopene, because they are more concentrated than fresh tomatoes.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (148g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 30 **Calories from Fat 5**
% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 15mg **1%**

Total Carbohydrate 7g **2%**

Dietary Fiber 2g **8%**

Sugars 4g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 20% • Vitamin C 45%

Calcium 0% • 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

Varieties

There are thousands of tomato varieties. The most widely available varieties are classified in three groups: cherry, plum, and slicing tomatoes. A new sweet variety like the cherry tomato is the grape tomato, really wonderful to eat alone or in a salad.

How To Select

Cold temperatures damage tomatoes, so never buy tomatoes that are stored in a cold area. Choose plump tomatoes with smooth skins that are free from bruises, cracks, or blemishes. Depending on the variety, ripe tomatoes should be completely red or reddish-orange.

Storage

Store tomatoes at room temperature (above 55°F) until they have fully ripened. This will allow them to ripen properly and develop good flavor and aroma. Try to store tomatoes out of direct sunlight, because sunlight will cause them to ripen unevenly. If you must store them for a longer period of time, place them in the refrigerator. Serve them at room temperature. Chopped tomatoes can be frozen for use in sauces or other cooked dishes.



Make Tomatoes Part of Your 5 A Day

- They add wonderful color, flavor, and texture to your favorite sandwich, salad, or omelet.
- They can be enjoyed stuffed, baked, stewed, or grilled.
- Try a broiled sliced tomatoes topped with basil leaves.
- Tomatoes make an excellent base for homemade soups or sauces and especially compliment pasta dishes.
- Raw tomatoes can make a tasty Mexican salsa (see recipe below).
- Tomatoes combine well with just about any type of food, such as, poultry, fish, rice, pasta, as well as other vegetables.
- Combine tomatoes with other vegetables to make a tasty side dish or snack.

Recipes



Grilled Tomatoes

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

2 ripe tomatoes

1/4 tsp oregano, fresh or dried to taste

lemon pepper, to taste

Slice tomatoes in half, lengthwise.

Prepare coals. Cover grill grid with foil.

Place tomatoes cut side down on foil and sprinkle with oregano and lemon pepper.

Grill tomatoes over hot coals for about 4-5 minutes.

Nutritional Analysis Per Serving: calories 19, protein 0g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 12%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 4g, fiber 1g, sodium 88mg

Tomatoes Stuffed with Snow Peas

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals four 5 A Day servings

4 ripe tomatoes

3/4 lbs snow peas

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

Cut tops from tomatoes. Using a curved grapefruit knife, remove the centers of the tomatoes. Stand tomatoes upside down to drain. In a covered steamer basket over boiling water, steam snow peas for 1 - 2 minutes or until crisp and tender. Drain. Arrange snow peas vertically in tomato shells.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 75, protein 4g, fat 1g, percent calories from fat 12%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 16g, fiber 4g, sodium 255mg

Gazpacho

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals two 5 A Day servings

8 large tomatoes
1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced
1 large green bell pepper, finely chopped
1 medium-size red onion, minced
3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp olive oil
3 Tbsp lemon juice
2 to 3 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
2 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped or 2 tsp. dried basil
salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste
tabasco sauce, to taste

To peel the tomatoes, submerge them in boiling water for 15 seconds. Place into a colander and rinse under cold water. The skins should slip right off. Core the tomatoes and gently squeeze out the seeds. Coarsely chop half of the tomatoes and puree the other half in a food processor. Combine the puree and chopped tomatoes in a large mixing bowl. Blend the remaining ingredients with the tomatoes. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving. Serve chilled; garnish with herbed croutons if desired.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 79, protein 2g, fat 2g, percent calories from fat 23%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 15g, fiber 3g, sodium 158mg

Homemade Salsa

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

1 cup finely chopped, peeled tomato

1/2 cup tomato sauce

1/4 cup yellow or red onion

1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper

2 Tbsp vinegar

2 cloves garlic, minced

1-3 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped (use caution; wear rubber gloves and do not rub your eyes when chopping peppers)

1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped (optional)

Mix all ingredients in a glass bowl. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 36, protein 2g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 0%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 8g, fiber 2g, sodium 12mg