

Produce of the
Month

Tomatoes

Welcome!

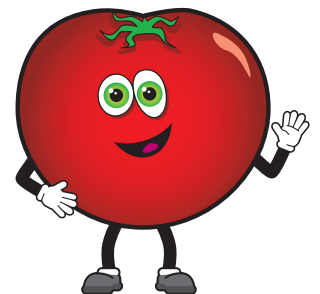
Tah-MAY-toh or Tah-MAH-to? Either way you pronounce it, its still one of the most delicious and nutritious fruits available, even though it's often mistaken for a vegetable. It's hard to believe that such a commonly used food was once thought to be a deadly poison. Available year-round in fresh and preserved forms, there is no shortage of uses for this versatile "vegetable."

French botanist Tournefort provided the Latin botanical name, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, to the tomato. It translates to "wolfpeach" - peach because it was round and luscious and wolf because it was erroneously considered poisonous. The botanist mistakenly took the tomato for the wolfpeach referred to by Galen in his third century writings and poison in an edible form which was used to slay wolves.

Florida produces virtually all of the fresh market field-grown tomatoes in the United States from December through May each year, and accounts for about 50 percent of all of the domestically produced fresh tomatoes in the United States. Each year, fresh tomatoes rank in the top three in consumer preference of vegetables in the supermarket produce department - contributing 7 to 10 percent of total produce department sales.

Did You Know?

- The high acidic content of the tomato makes it a prime candidate for canning, which is one of the main reasons the tomato is canned more than any other fruit or vegetable. This is why tomatoes are so often used in sauces, marinades, dressings and condiments. Hence why on average, Americans consume 18 pounds of tomatoes each year!
- There are at least 10,000 varieties of healthy, delicious tomatoes. The most widely available varieties are classified in three groups: cherry, plum, and slicing tomatoes. Most vary in size and color, some though even in shape! The smallest species of tomatoes are less than three-quarters of an inch in diameter. With such a selection to choose from when opting for that perfect tomato, it's no wonder that tomatoes are the key ingredient in 78% of Americans favorite recipes!
- Lycopene is a natural antioxidant found in tomatoes and tomato products that give them their rich red color. Cooked tomato products such as, spaghetti sauce, tomato juice and ketchup are some of the best sources of lycopene, which is beneficial to your health!
- The tomato is the world's most popular fruit. More than 60 million tons of tomatoes are produced per year, 16 million tons more than the second most popular fruit, the banana.
- The tomato is a true American native. Originally cultivated by Aztecs and Incas as early as 700 A.D., tomatoes were introduced to Europeans during 16th century explorations. The French called it "the apple of love," the Germans "the apple of paradise."



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Nutrition Information

The healthy good looks of a fresh, red ripe tomato are not just skin deep. Tomatoes are packed with health promoting vitamins and disease fighting phytochemicals, in particular lycopene. Tomatoes are also a source of fiber, have almost no sodium or fat and, like all vegetables, have no cholesterol. All this great nutrition for a measly 35 calories makes the tomato an ideal dining choice!

One medium tomato (148 g) supplies 40 percent of the U.S. recommended daily allowance (U.S. RDA) of vitamin C and 20 percent of vitamin A, some of which is in the form of beta-carotene. Beta-carotene is an antioxidant associated with a reduced risk of certain cancers. Tomatoes also contain lycopene, which research suggests may reduce certain types of cancers. Tomatoes are a source of dietary fiber, containing about as much fiber as a slice of whole wheat bread. Tomatoes provide potassium, iron, phosphorous and some B vitamins.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1 medium tomato (148g)	
Calories: 35	
Calories from fat: 0	
% Daily Value*	
Total fat 0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 20%	
Vitamin C 40%	
Calcium 2%	
Iron 2%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Source: PMA's Labeling Facts

For Your Health!

The tomato not only thrills the taste buds and brightens the dinner table, it also helps fight disease. A review of 72 different studies by the Harvard School of Public Health showed consistently that the more tomatoes and tomato products people eat, the lower their risks of many different kinds of cancer. The secret may lie in lycopene, the chemical that makes tomatoes red. Processed tomatoes (e.g. canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, ketchup) contain even more lycopene because cooking breaks down cell walls, releasing and concentrating carotenoids. Eating tomatoes with an additional, small amount of fat from a complimentary food enables lycopene to be better absorbed.

Fruits and vegetables are a key part of our daily diet. Everyone needs at least 5 to 9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables for the nutrients they contain and to maintain your general health. Incorporating tomatoes into you daily meals will easily help you achieve this goal. The versatile fruit makes a wonderful addition to any meal choice. Pour an ice cold glass of tomato juice to accompany your morning breakfast, toss some cherry tomatoes in a healthy salad, add a few slices to a yummy sandwich, or douse some hearty whole wheat pasta in a rich tomato sauce.

Quotable Notable

"It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato." - Lewis Grizzard

A Tasty Treat To Try At Home

Baked Tomatoes with an Easy Herb Topping

4 medium firm, ripe tomatoes
 ? cup finely chopped parsley
 ? cup finely chopped basil
 3 cloves of finely chopped garlic
 2 tsp. of olive oil
 ? cup grated Parmesan cheese
 Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Remove tops of tomatoes and scoop out seeds and pulp with a small spoon. Arrange hollowed tomatoes in a baking dish.
3. In a small bowl, combine parsley, basil, garlic and salt and pepper to taste. Stir well and spoon 2 tsp. into each tomato.
4. Drizzle with olive oil and top each tomato with 1tsp. of cheese.
5. Bake 20 minutes or until soft. Serve at room temperature.

Source: Florida Tomato Commission (www.floridatomatoes.org)

Tricky Tomato Trivia

Take your best guess and see how many tomato trivia questions you can get correct.

1. Tomato juice is the official state beverage of which state?
 Pennsylvania Missouri Texas Ohio
2. The largest tomato ever grown (to date), weighed in at:
 4lbs. 8oz. 7lbs. 12oz. 8lbs. 3oz. 10lbs. 4oz.
3. How many known varieties of tomatoes are there?
 2,500 3,000 8,000 10,000
4. One tomato plant can produce _____ tomatoes in a season.
 6 15 35 35
5. Both tomatoes and apples have a natural ripening hormone called:
 Ethylene Adenine Abscisic Acid Ethephon
6. The jelly like substance around the seeds of a tomato contains the highest concentration of vitamin:
 A B C D
7. What is the substance that gives tomatoes their rich, red color?
 Ethylene Lycopene Vitamin C Vitamin D