

Home on the Range

Discover Tomato Possibilities

Perhaps no other vegetables, with the possible exception of sweet corn, highlights the summer dinner table like farm-fresh tomatoes.

Despite the industry's best efforts, nothing can compare to a tomato that is ripened on the vine.

According to the Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program, tomatoes are a member of the nightshade family along with potatoes, peppers, and eggplant. Europeans considered the tomato fruit poisonous when Spanish explorers brought the

plants back to Europe from South America, and grew it as an ornamental houseplant.

It wasn't until the 19th century that the tomato began gaining acceptance as a food. Initially, both Europeans and Americans were careful to cook tomatoes for hours to neutralize "poisons." Finally in the last half of the 19th century, people realized the tomato was safe and delicious to eat raw or lightly cooked.

Tomatoes are almost considered a staple in the American diet because they combine so easily with so many different foods

such as pasta, rice, poultry, and fish as well as other vegetables.

Tomatoes picked before they are fully ripe can develop an appetizing flavor and texture if two basic conditions are met. First, the tomatoes must not be refrigerated. They should be stored at room temperature or at least 55 degrees. Unripe tomatoes that have been subjected to temperatures below this level will never ripen satisfactorily.

Food and medical authorities recommend eating three to five servings of vegetables each day. Fresh tomatoes provide an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. In fact, one medium tomato supplies more than 40 percent of the daily allowance of vitamin C and 20 percent of vitamin A plus potassium — all with only 35 calories.

Here are some recipes.

MOTHER-IN-LAW'S DELICIOUS KETCHUP

2 gallons uncooked tomato chunks
2 onions
Boil together tomato chunks and onions. Put through tomato strainer. Add:
5 tablespoons salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon cloves
2 cups vinegar
Boil one hour, add:
6 cups sugar
7 tablespoons Clear Jel
Boil mixture an additional hour. Fill pint jars, adjust lid, and process 15 minutes in boiling water bath.

Almeda Fox
Leola

TOMATO COCKTAIL

6 quarts tomato juice
2 teaspoons onion salt
2 teaspoons celery salt
2 teaspoons garlic salt
Pepper to taste
1½ cups sugar
2 tablespoons salt
Wash, cut, boil, and put through sieve (about 1 peck tomatoes, enough to make 6 quarts juice. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil, put in jars and process for 5 minutes. If you don't like garlic, omit garlic salt.

This makes a great tasting juice and is good for chili or any tomato dish. I use for tomato soup too.

Esther Mishler
Hollsopple

TOMATO AND CHEESE SALAD

10-inch dinner plate
12 slices tomatoes
12 slices fresh mozzarella cheese
Red wine vinegar
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
lettuce leaves
Oregano
Line dinner plate with tomato slices, top with cheese. Drizzle oil and vinegar over plate and salt and pepper to taste. May arrange over lettuce leaves if desired. Drizzle oregano sparingly over top of cheese when ready to serve. Wonderful with crusty bread and sufficient for a lunch. Yields 3-4 servings.

Babe Hopkins
Avondale



Pennsylvania's fresh market tomato crop is grown on 4,000 acres. Another 1,400 acres are used to grow tomatoes for food processors.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients, and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Be sure to include your name and address. Recipes should reach our office one week before the publishing date listed below.

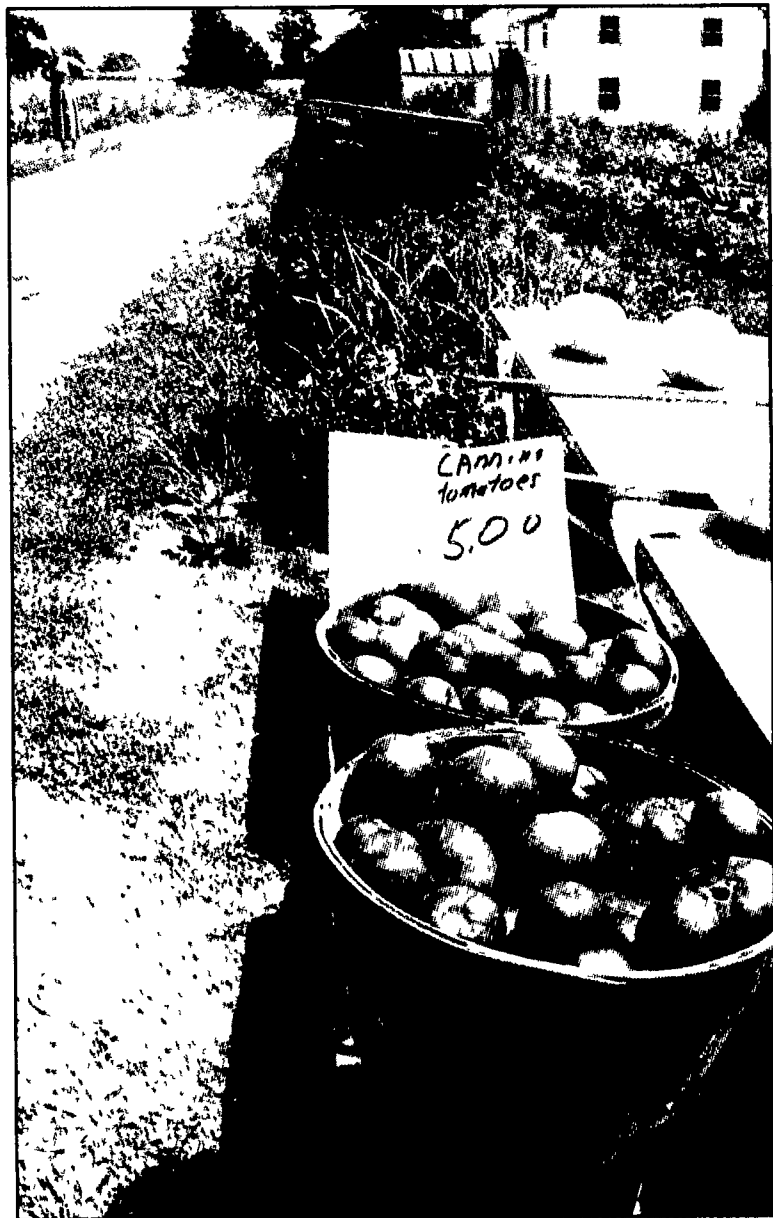
Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.

August

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- 25 — Grilling Seafood

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- 1 — Shrimp Fest
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If you don't have tomatoes in your garden, buy them at a roadside farm market or community farmers's market.

STUFFED TOMATO

1 tomato
Tuna or egg salad (your favorite recipe)
Lettuce leaves
Sprig parsley
Line plate with lettuce leaves. Core tomato and leave about one-inch pulp around tomato. Turn tomato over to drain juice. When drained, stuff with your favorite tuna or egg salad and garnish with a sprig of parsley. Before filling tomato, take a knife and make an X into the tomato about halfway down so it opens into four quarters — stuff. Ingredient amounts depend on size of tomato.

Variation: This same process can be used for cherry tomatoes and served as an appetizer. Don't cut the X on the cherry tomatoes—they're too small.

Babe Hopkins
Avondale

BETTY'S BOILED HERB TOMATOES

3 large ripe tomatoes (peeled if desired)
½ cup flour
4 tablespoons melted butter
3 tablespoons light brown sugar or honey
2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon or parsley
1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives
½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

1 teaspoon salt
Ground peppercorns for topping

Cut tomatoes in half horizontally. Place flour in shallow bowl and roll each half of tomato, fully coating each. Dip in melted butter. Place in baking dish and sprinkle the brown sugar or drizzle the honey over tomatoes. Add herbs, salt, and pepper. Broil until golden brown, approximately five minutes, and serve immediately. Do not overcook.

Serves 4-6.

Betty Groff

TOMATO CASSEROLE

4 slices bacon, cut into small pieces
¼ cup chopped onion
2 cups fresh, ripe tomatoes
2 cups bread cubes or croutons
½ cup light brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 hard-boiled egg, peeled
Garnish with tomato slices, croutons or herbs

In a heavy skillet, fry the bacon and onion until golden brown. Add tomatoes, bread cubes, sugar, and salt. Blend and pour into a buttered 2-quart baking dish. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes. Remove and top with sliced egg. Garnish as desired. (Add grated cheese before serving as a different touch).

Featured Recipe

Salsa is the Mexican word for sauce, which can mean cooked or fresh mixtures. In recent years, the availability and variety of salsa has exploded in the U.S. Varieties range from mild spiciness to mouth-searing hot.

Salsas are a great way to liven up grilled meats, seafoods, and a variety of other dishes. But the most popular is probably as a dip using tortilla chips.

Serve fresh salsa within a few hours of preparation. If it sits too long, the acidic ingredients will cook the salsa and ruin its texture. Raw ingredients such as raw garlic, onion, and chilies will oxidize making the flavors sharp. Allow to stand 15-20 minutes before serving for flavors to mingle. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled.

Here is an easy recipe to make use of tomatoes in season.

TOMATO SALSA

2 cups diced plum tomatoes
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup diced yellow or green bell pepper
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded, veined, minced
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon cilantro, chopped
1 tablespoon oil
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 clove garlic, minced

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for a few hours to blend flavors. Makes 3 cups.