



# Produce Spotlight on **TOMATOES**



**Tomatoes** are classified as a fruit because they develop from a flower and have seeds on the inside. Tomatoes are high in vitamins A and C which help fight infection and heal wounds. They are also rich in lycopene. This antioxidant may help lower the risk of some forms of cancer, promote heart health, and helps keep the immune system healthy.

## Serving Ideas

- Make fresh salsa with diced tomatoes, chopped red onion, minced jalapeño and garlic, fresh cilantro, corn, black beans, and lime juice.
- Make a pizza with sliced tomatoes and cheddar cheese on whole-wheat bread. Add spices such as oregano, basil, or parsley on top. Broil or toast until the cheese melts.

## Tomato Math

1 medium tomato =

5 to 6 cherry tomatoes

1 cup chopped tomato = one serving



## Shopping for Tomatoes

When shopping, look for bright red tomatoes that are soft but firm. Ripe tomatoes will have a slightly sweet smell. Avoid tomatoes that are bruised or look damaged. Size will vary depending on the type of tomato. Peak season in New England is between July and mid-September.

## Common Types

**Beefsteak** – large, dense, and juicy with a mild flavor, sliced in sandwiches

**Cherry or Grape** – small, juicy, multicolored, with a semi-sweet flavor, eaten whole in salads

**Heirloom** (non commercial and naturally pollinated) – varies in size and texture, with an earthy, sweet flavor

**Plum** (Roma or Italian) – firm and dense with intense flavor, ideal for sauces

## Storage and Preparation

- Store tomatoes unwashed at room temperature, away from sunlight, and use within two to three days. Refrigerate ripe tomatoes and use within one week. Place unripe tomatoes (very firm or green) in a brown paper bag loosely closed and store at room temperature and away from direct sunlight. Check daily for ripening. Wash under cold water before eating.
- Tomatoes can be canned or frozen for long-term storage. Freeze washed and prepared tomatoes on baking sheets. When firm, transfer to a freezer bag or container. Label and date. For information on canning, visit <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/canning-tomato-products-safety-guidelines>.

## Using Locally Grown Produce

Visit the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program's [website](#) featuring recipes using fruits and vegetables. To locate places to buy local produce, visit [www.mass.gov/massgrown](http://www.mass.gov/massgrown).

