TOMATO

Tomatoes are often served raw on salads and sandwiches, or can be added to soups, casseroles, and stews. Tomatoes can be baked, broiled, roasted, juiced, blended, boiled, or stewed, and may be used in a variety of dishes.

FUN FACT :
While a tomato is botanically considered a fruit, it is considered a vegetable for culinary uses.

Tomato plants are fun to grow in gardens. They grow best in the summer when it is hot.

Tomatoes are rich in vitamin A and vitamin C and are a RED/ORANGE vegtable. Tomatoes are also a rich source of lycopene, an antioxidant which may help prevent disease. Lycopene in tomatoes is enhanced by cooking them.

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Safety:	Wash tomatoes in running water before using them (CDC recommends using water about 10˚F warmer than the tomato). Do not soak tomatoes. Discard tomatoes with broken skin. Hold cut tomatoes at or below 41˚F. Unrefrigerated cut tomatoes must be discarded within 4 hours. Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.
Yield:	For 100 ½ cup servings of raw tomato purchase 12 lbs - 15 lbs.
Quality:	Ensure whole product is free from obvious signs of soil and skin damage, such as punctures. Cut away bruised or damaged areas, or do not use the tomato. Fresh whole tomatoes should be chilled before being cut if they will be held.
Storage:	Whole undamaged tomatoes can be stored in a cool dry place (55-65˚F) but they are most often held in the chiller. After cutting, hold tomatoes at 41°F or below. Refrigerated cut tomatoes to must be consumed or discarded within 7 days. Vine Ripened garden tomatoes are most flavorful, but have a short storage time.
Preparation:	Wash tomatoes under warm, fresh water. Remove core. Slice in half lengthwise. Tomato seeds may be removed if desired by gently squeezing the fruit and using a spoon. Continue to slice or chop into desired pieces to serve fresh. Whole grape or cherry tomatoes may not need to be cut at all. Tomatoes can also be pureed or chopped and quickly cooked for a fresh tasting sauce or simmered for a long time for a more traditional sauce
Seasonings:	Tomatoes are delicious with Italian seasonings, such as basil, oregano, garlic, and olive oil. They also are great with Mexican/Southwest flavors, such as cilantro, onion, and peppers as a fresh “pico de gallo” salsa. Chopped or sliced fresh tomatoes are a nice addition to sandwiches, salads, pastas, and pizzas.