



Connecting School Foods to Curriculum, NJ Farms, and the Kitchen Table

TOMATOES ARE THE FEATURED ITEM FOR GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE!

A Garden State on Your Plate Tomato Tasting

To conduct your own tasting, observe the differences in color, size, and shape of the whole fruit. Cut into half and note the amount of seeds to pulp, and the textures and shapes of the interior. Contemplate the differences in flavor and texture. Is the skin tough or tender, or somewhere in between? Is the flavor sweet or acidic? Count the seeds and compare. Which one do you think would make the best pizza sauce, and why? Season the tomato variously, with salt, with olive oil, even with finely chopped basil leaves. Or make a salsa, with chopped tomato, chili peppers, onions, and salt. How does the flavor change or deepen? If possible, try the tomatoes raw, roasted, and dried and note changes.

Tomatoes gradually became a mainstay in Italy (it was first mentioned in 1544), and the Turks took tomatoes to the Levant and Balkan countries. The tomato was introduced to the US in the 19th century; tomatoes are the main ingredient in ketchup, a Chinese-derived word that once referred to a spicy fish sauce. The British introduced the tomato to India. The tomato is second only to the potato in worldwide production.

Tomatoes—"solanum lycopersicum" in Latin – originated in northwestern South America. Wild relatives of the cultivated tomato extend along the coast from Ecuador to northern Chile and the Galapagos Islands. Genetic resources from the wild tomato have helped develop varieties that are tolerant to drought, extreme temperatures and high salt content in soils.



The appetizing flavor and smell of a ripe tomato

come from chemicals, including volatile aromatics, acids, and sugars. Fresh, home-grown tomatoes are delicious in summer salads, with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt, or between two slices of fresh bread slathered with mayonnaise and dressed with salt and pepper. Store uncut tomatoes on the counter.

There is no word for tomato in Quechua or other ancient Andean languages, so the fruit possibly was not used until it was introduced from Mexico after the Americas fell under Spanish conquest. In Mexico, the tomato is known by its Spanish name, "tomate," derived from the Nahuatl or Aztec "tomatl." They were introduced to the US from Europe in the 18th century.

See Garden State on Your Plate photos on Facebook at www.facebook.com/psgcoop.org

A PROJECT OF THE PRINCETON SCHOOL GARDENS COOPERATIVE, PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND POMPTONIAN FOOD SERVICE WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE BENT SPOON AND WHOLE EARTH CENTER • NEWSLETTER EDITOR: KARLA COOK

MEXICO

THE ONLY SALSA YOU NEED

Andy Baraghani, Bon Appetit magazine <https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/the-only-salsa-you-need>

Makes about 4 cups

- 2 pounds tomatoes, cored, cut in half crosswise
- 1 medium white onion, sliced into ¼" -thick rounds
- 3 serrano chiles
- 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- Kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro

1. Heat broiler. Place tomatoes cut side down on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Fit onion, chiles, and garlic around tomatoes so everything is snug but not overlapping. Broil, turning onion and chiles once, until lightly charred, about 6 minutes for chiles and garlic and 15–18 minutes for tomatoes and onion.
2. Peel garlic and place in a food processor along with half of the tomatoes. Pulse until very smooth. Add remaining tomatoes and pulse until tomatoes are mostly broken up but mixture still has some texture. Transfer to a medium bowl. 3. Finely chop onion and chiles and mix into purée; season with salt. Let cool. Stir in lime juice and cilantro. Season salsa with more salt if needed.

Ingredients that Go Well with Tomatoes

arugula • basil • bay leaf • bell peppers • blue cheese
carrots • chile peppers • chives • cilantro • coriander
corn • cucumbers • dill • eggplant • fennel • fish • garlic
goat cheese • Gorgonzola lamb • leeks • lemon • lovage
marjoram • mint • mozzarella olives • onions • parsley
pasta • pepper • salt • shallots

Words that Describe the Flavor, Color, and Texture of Tomatoes

acid • astringent • balanced • bite • cucumber
fruity • grassy • green apple • green peel
juicy mealy metallic • salty • seedy • skunky
sweet • tart • tin • viney • woody

GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE TOMATO FACTS

Tomatoes are the main ingredient in salsa, in ketchup, and in pasta and pizza sauce.

Tomatoes are a member of the nightshade family and related to peppers, eggplant, and white potatoes.

Tomatoes are sometimes tasting sweet and sometimes tasting a bit sour. Jersey tomatoes are often said to have the best flavor!

Tomatoes are the state vegetable of New Jersey. New Jersey ranks 8th in tomato production in the United States.

Tomatoes are easy to grow from seed and are fun to eat, still hot from the sun. But, refrigeration kills the flavor and texture of tomatoes!

Tomatoes are classified into three groups: cherry, plum, and slicing. In Europe, tomatoes were thought to be poisonous until the nineteenth century.

New Jersey tomatoes are mostly grown for wholesale in Salem, Gloucester, Cumberland, and Atlantic counties.

Tomatoes have fanciful names such as Lemon Boy, Mister Stripey, Snow White, Mortgage Lifter, and Eva Purple Ball.

Tomatoes come in different colors including red, orange, yellow, purple, black, green, and white.

Tomatoes are classified as a fruit, though we think of them as vegetables. Half a cup of tomatoes contains 40% of the recommended daily value for vitamin C and they're a good source of Vitamin A.



Garden State on Your Plate is a series of seasonal produce tastings in the cafeterias at Princeton Public Schools. The emphasis is on a New Jersey produce item, its growth requirements, the different ways it can be prepared, and how the flavor can be altered by the chef and the students. Students learn about farming, climate, and cooking, and they gain flavor power—the ability to personalize their item using salt and citrus. The tastings illustrate and amplify curriculum in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and in the district's Edible Gardens.



Founded in 2005, Princeton School Gardens Cooperative fosters garden- and food-based education in the classroom, cafeteria and community PSGCOOP.ORG

ITALY

MARCELLA HAZAN'S FAMOUS TOMATO SAUCE

The Kitchn <https://www.thekitchn.com/marcella-hazans-amazing-4ingre-144538>

Simmer a 28-ounce can of tomatoes with an onion, peeled and halved, and five tablespoons of butter. Add a pinch of salt and pull out the onion at the end, and you're left with a bright, velvety tomato sauce with a rich roundness from the butter. The butter doesn't saw off the edges of the tomatoes' tanginess in the way that sugar does; instead it complements the brightness and makes it shine.

SPAIN

BEST GAZPACHO

By Julia Moskin, The New York Times <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1017577-best-gazpacho>

Yield: 8 to 12 servings, about 1 quart

Julia Moskin writes: "More of a drink than a soup, served in frosted glasses or chilled tumblers, gazpacho is perfect when it is too hot to eat but you need cold, salt and lunch all at the same time. Gazpacho is everywhere in Seville, Spain, where this recipe comes from"

About 2 pounds ripe red tomatoes, cored and roughly cut into chunks

1 Italian frying (cubanelle) pepper or another long, light green pepper, such as Anaheim, cored, seeded and roughly cut into chunks

1 cucumber, about 8 inches long, peeled and roughly cut into chunks

1 small mild onion (white or red), peeled and roughly cut into chunks

1 clove garlic

2 teaspoons sherry vinegar, more to taste

Salt

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, more to taste, plus more for drizzling

1. Combine tomatoes, pepper, cucumber, onion and garlic in a blender or, if using a hand blender, in a deep bowl. (If necessary, work in batches.) Blend at high speed until very smooth, at least 2 minutes, pausing occasionally to scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula.
2. With the motor running, add the vinegar and 2 teaspoons salt. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil. The mixture will turn bright orange or dark pink and become smooth and emulsified, like a salad dressing. If it still seems watery, drizzle in more olive oil until texture is creamy.
3. Strain the mixture through a strainer or a food mill, pushing all the liquid through with a spatula or the back of a ladle. Discard the solids. Transfer to a large pitcher (preferably glass) and chill until very cold, at least 6 hours or overnight.
4. Before serving, adjust the seasonings with salt and vinegar. If soup is very thick, stir in a few tablespoons ice water. Serve in glasses, over ice if desired, or in a bowl. A few drops of olive oil on top are a nice touch.

INDIA

BUTTER CHICKPEAS

By Melissa Clark, The New York Times, <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020739-indian-butter-chickpeas>

4–6 servings

This fragrant stew, a vegetarian riff on Indian Butter Chicken, is spiced with cinnamon, garam masala and fresh ginger, and is rich and creamy from the coconut milk.

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 4 garlic cloves, finely grated or minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 2 teaspoons garam masala
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled plum tomatoes
- 1 (15-ounce) can coconut milk
- 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained
- Ground cayenne (optional)
- Cooked white rice, for serving
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves and tender stems, for serving

1. Melt butter in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook until golden and browned around the edges, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes. (Don't be tempted to turn the heat up to medium-high; keeping the heat on medium ensures even browning without burning the butter.)
2. Stir in garlic and ginger, and cook another 1 minute. Stir in cumin, paprika, garam masala and cinnamon stick, and cook another 30 seconds.
3. Add tomatoes with their juices. Using a large spoon or flat spatula, break up and smash the tomatoes in the pot (or you can use a pair of kitchen shears to cut the tomatoes while they are still in the can). Stir in coconut milk and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Bring to a simmer, and continue to cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, and continuing to mash up the tomatoes if necessary to help them break down.
4. Stir in chickpeas and a pinch of cayenne if you like. Bring the pot back up to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 10 minutes. Taste and add more salt if necessary.
5. Serve spooned over white rice, and topped with cilantro.

SHAKSHUKA (NORTH AFRICAN-STYLE POACHED EGGS IN SPICY TOMATO SAUCE)

By J. Kenji López-Alt, Serious Eats <https://www.serious-eats.com/shakshuka-north-african-shirred-eggs-tomato-pepper-recipe>

J. Kenji Lopez-Alt writes: "The origin of the word shakshuka is debated, but most likely it comes from the Arabic for "mixture," and the dish itself probably got its start as just that: a mixture of odds and ends cooked in a pan or a tagine with eggs.... Today shakshuka is popular throughout the Middle East and in hip neighborhood diners all over the coastal U.S."

3 tablespoons (45ml) extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

1 large red pepper (bell pepper for milder heat, or a hotter variety, such as red horned pepper, depending on your heat preference), stems, seeds, and ribs removed, thinly sliced

1 fresh small hot chile (such as jalapeño, serrano, or Fresno), stems, seeds, and ribs removed, thinly sliced

2 to 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 1/2 tablespoons (15g) sweet Hungarian or smoked Spanish paprika

2 teaspoons (8g) whole or ground cumin seeds

1 (28-ounce; 800g) can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by squeezing between your fingers or with a pastry blender (see note)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Large handful minced cilantro, parsley, or a mix

6 eggs

Sliced oil-cured black olives, feta cheese, and/or artichoke hearts, for serving (all optional)

Crusty bread, for serving

1. Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet or straight-sided sauté pan over high heat until shimmering. Add onion, red pepper, and chile and spread into an even layer. Cook, without moving, until vegetables on the bottom are deeply browned and beginning to char in spots, about 6 minutes. Stir and repeat.
2. Continue to cook until vegetables are fully softened and spottily charred, about another 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until softened and fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add paprika and cumin and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Immediately add tomatoes and stir to combine. Reduce heat to a bare simmer and simmer for 10 minutes, then season to taste with salt and pepper and stir in half of cilantro or parsley.
3. Using a large spoon, make a well near the perimeter of the pan and break an egg directly into it. Spoon a little sauce over edges of egg white to partially submerge and contain it, leaving yolk exposed. Repeat with remaining 5 eggs, working around pan as you go. Season eggs with a little salt, cover, reduce heat to lowest setting, and cook until egg whites are barely set and yolks are still runny, 5 to 8 minutes.
4. Sprinkle with remaining cilantro or parsley, along with any of the optional toppings. Serve immediately with crusty bread.