

# Foods For Thought

From the Vegetable Garden Team of Eden Mill Nature Center

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Featuring:

**TOMATO**



Presented by  
Harford County  
Master  
Gardeners  
and  
Family &  
Consumer  
Sciences  
Educator

## Baked Parmesan Tomatoes

### Ingredients

1 medium tomato, washed and sliced into 4 pieces  
4 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon chopped basil or Italian seasoning



Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of shredded Parmesan cheese on each tomato slice. Sprinkle basil or Italian seasoning over the cheese.

Bake at 425° F for 5 to 6 minutes in the toaster oven or regular oven. Once the cheese starts to bubble, the tomatoes are done.

### Directions

Arrange tomato slices on a baking sheet.

*Nutrition Info per 1 slice: Calories 40; Carbs 3g; Protein 3g; Fat 2g*

## Pasta with Cherry Tomatoes

### Ingredients

1 pint of cherry tomatoes, washed  
1 pound box of pasta  
2 garlic cloves minced  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
10 to 15 large basil leaves  
4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (optional)



al dente (according to the package). Drain and set aside. While the pasta is cooking start on the cherry tomato sauce. In a large skillet over medium heat, add the tomatoes and cover. Cook for 10 minutes until they start to burst. If the tomatoes stick to the pan add 2 tablespoons of water. Add the garlic, salt and pepper and cook for 2-3 minutes longer. Add the cooked pasta and toss together. Top with basil and cheese.

### Directions

In a large sauce pot bring 4-6 quarts of water to a boil. Then add the pasta and cook until

*Nutrition Info per 1 cup: Calories 219; Carbs 45g; Protein 7g; Fat 1g; Sodium 81mg*

## Taco Stuffed Tomatoes

### Ingredients

4 large tomatoes, washed  
1 pound lean ground beef  
1 pkg. low-sodium taco seasoning



### Directions

Brown the hamburger. Add taco seasoning and cook as directed on package. Cut an "X" into the top of each tomato, not quite all the way through. Gently pull them apart. Fill the tomato with taco meat and desired toppings.

### Optional toppings:

Shredded cheddar cheese  
Shredded lettuce  
Diced raw onion  
Sour cream

*Nutrition Info per tomato cup: Calories 205; Carbs 7g; Protein 22g; Fat 9g; Sodium 220mg*

*Recipes courtesy of Harford County Master Gardeners*



## Who said this?

### Homegrown Tomatoes

Ain't nothin' in the world that I like better  
Than bacon & lettuce & homegrown tomatoes  
Up in the mornin' out in the garden  
Get you a ripe one, don't get a hard one

Plant 'em in the spring eat 'em in the summer  
All winter without 'em's a culinary bummer  
I forget all about the sweatin' & diggin'  
Every time I go out and pick me a big one

Homegrown tomatoes, homegrown tomatoes  
What'd life be without homegrown tomatoes  
Only two things that money can't buy  
That's true love and homegrown tomatoes  
- **Guy Clark, American Folk Singer**

"Grilled cheese and tomato soup is the ultimate comfort meal." - **Ina Garten, Author and Chef**

"Some kids have never seen a real tomato off the vine... I wanted them to see just how challenging and rewarding it is to grow your own food, so they would better understand what our farmers are doing every day across this country. And have an appreciation for...growing our own food and feeding ourselves."  
- **Michelle Obama, Former First Lady**

## Believe It or Not!

- Tomatoes have been to outer space! 600,000 tomato seeds went to the International Space Station before being grown in classrooms all over Canada.
- There are over 10,000 varieties of tomato!
- The biggest tomato fight in the world happens each year in a small Spanish town. The festival is called La Tomatina and some 40,000 people throw 150,000 tomatoes at each other!
- Do not refrigerate tomatoes. They will lose their flavor and become mealy.
- Heinz Tomato Ketchup has a speed limit! If the sauce pours at more than 0.028 mph when it's in the factory, it's considered too runny and is rejected.
- As early as 1781, Thomas Jefferson cultivated and ate tomatoes.

**MASTER  
GARDENER** 

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## What is... a tomato?

Contrary to popular opinion, a tomato is a fruit not a vegetable because it contains seeds. About 93% of American gardeners grow tomatoes. The tomato history has origins traced back to the early Aztecs around 700 A.D; therefore it is believed that the tomato is native to the Americas. It was not until around the 16th century that Europeans were introduced to this fruit when the early explorers set sail to discover new lands. It was not regarded as a kitchen vegetable until the times preceding The Civil War Period in the United States.

It is an extremely versatile, culinary fruit. Here are a few favorite serving ideas from the gardeners...grilled cheese and tomato sandwiches; bacon, lettuce, and tomato; a burger with a large tomato slice, and the throwback tomato sandwich on soft white bread, with mayonnaise, salt, and pepper. We chop tomatoes and pop them into cold pasta salad, homemade salsa, omelets, casseroles, and atop scrambled eggs or pizza slices.

Here is a new idea. Place tomatoes along with spinach or kale in the bottom of a soup bowl. Ladle any kind of soup over the vegetables and you have a new version of soup and salad. Perhaps our ideal is a Sun Sugar Yellow Cherry tomato plucked off the vine, warm from the morning sun and popped into the mouth. It's the taste of summer.

## Health Benefits

Tomatoes are loaded with potassium, Vitamin B and Vitamin E. They also contain lycopene which is an antioxidant. Some research shows that lycopene may make you less likely to have lung, stomach, or prostate cancer and might help prevent the disease of the pancreas, colon, throat, mouth, breast and cervix as well. Some research also shows that nutrients from tomatoes can ease inflammation, boost your immune system and lower cholesterol levels.



Source: WebMD

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