



Tomatoes

**NUTRITION:**

Tomatoes are low in calories, an excellent source of vitamin C, and a noteworthy source of vitamin A.

HOW TO SELECT:

Vine-ripened tomatoes have better flavor than those picked green, but may not always be found on the market because they bruise easily in shipment. Look for tomatoes that are firm but not overripe, red in color, plump, smooth, and free from blemishes.

STORAGE:

Under ripe tomatoes will stop ripening and turn watery in the refrigerator so it is recommended that they be spread in a dry place, light or dark, at a temperature of 55-77 degrees F. Sunny window sills can lead to uneven ripening and unwanted softness. Store fully ripe tomatoes in the refrigerator. Green tomatoes make excellent relishes and preserves too.

DRYING:

Use any variety. Fully ripened but not soft.

Preparation:

- Steam dip in boiling water to loosen skins.
- Chill in cold water; peel.
- Cut into sections not more than 3/4 inch wide.

Pretreatment:

- None.

Drying Procedure:

- Spread tomato slices in single layer on non-aluminum trays.
- Dry in an oven at lowest setting (140 degrees F.) leaving door open 2-6 inches for 4-8 hours or in a dehydrator (140 degrees F.) until crisp, about 4-8 hours.
- Dried tomatoes can be crumbled for use in stews, soups, casseroles and also make delicious chips for dips.

Vegetable Leather:

- Cook fresh tomatoes until liquid is almost gone.
- Put through sieve or food mill to remove seeds.
- Experiment by adding various herbs or spices such as chili powder, basil, caraway seeds, or whatever strikes your fancy!
- Place on plastic wrap, tilt to distribute evenly.
- Place in dehydrator or oven to dry using the same guidelines as those for dried tomatoes. Check often.

FREEZING:

Recommended only if tomatoes are to be cooked when thawed. May be frozen whole. Wash, spread on trays and freeze. After they are frozen solid, pack in freezer bags or containers. Label and freeze. Skins will slip off easily when they are thawed for use.

CANNING:

WATER BATH CAN

Always select firm, ripe, but not overripe tomatoes, picked from living vines free from soft spots, mildew, or decay. Process as soon after harvest as possible. Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines.

Preparation: To peel, dip tomatoes in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds, or until skins split, cool at once in cold water. Skins will slip off readily. Cut out stems and cut into quarters.

Hot Pack: (crushed, packed hot without added liquid)

The advantage of using the hot pack method is more tomatoes can be put in each jar plus the prevention of floating tomatoes after processing. Heat 1/6 of a canner load of tomatoes quickly, crushing them with a wooden spoon as they are added to press out juice. Heat to boiling, stirring to prevent burning. Add remaining quartered tomatoes, stirring constantly. Crushing is not necessary for these. Boil gently 5 minutes after adding all tomatoes. Pack into canning jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Add citric acid U.S.P. (1/4 teaspoon per pint; 1/2 teaspoon per quart) or bottled lemon juice (1 tablespoon per pint; 2 tablespoons per quart). Sugar may be added to mask any sour flavor (1 teaspoon per pint; 2 teaspoons per quart). Salt may be added for flavor if desired. Process in a boiling water bath canner, 35 minutes for pints and 45 minutes for quarts.

Raw Pack:

The advantage of raw pack is that tomatoes will be firmer, however not as many tomatoes will fit in each jar. Prepare tomatoes as described above, leaving whole or half. Loosely fill jars with raw tomatoes, pressing until spaces fill with juice, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Add citric acid or lemon juice, and salt, if desired (same proportions as for hot pack). Process in a boiling water bath canner, 85 minutes for pints and quarts.

For additional information and recipes request:

PNW300 Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products (\$1.00)

PNW0395 SALSA RECIPES for CANNING (\$1.00)

Call WSU Cooperative Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

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