

VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK

TOMATOES

Every year we grow different kinds of tomato varieties, although you can expect to see a few of the standards every year: classic red slicers and cherry tomatoes. We also grow a few heirloom tomatoes. These tomatoes sometimes have a unique cracked appearance near the stem or odd shapes and colors. Don't worry — they're supposed to look that way. Inside, you'll be rewarded with a delicious, juicy flavor!

To store: Do not refrigerate tomatoes; cold temperatures deplete their flavor & texture. If your tomatoes smell fragrant and yield slightly when squeezed, they are ready to use. If not, store them for a few days at room temperature out of the sun until they are ripe. Putting dry tomatoes in a brown paper bag may accelerate the ripening process.

Handling: If serving tomatoes raw or lightly cooked, give them a quick rinse and slice, chop or cut them into chunks as desired. If you'll be cooking them for a long time, consider removing the skins so they don't float around in your dish. To do so, score the end of the tomato with an "X," dunk whole tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds, lift out with slotted spoon, plunge into ice water, and the skins will slide off.

To freeze: Tomatoes can be frozen whole. Skin and core tomatoes, place on cookie sheet, and freeze. When solid, place in ziplock freezer bag and replace in freezer. Thawed tomatoes are appropriate only for cooking sauces, salsas, or purees. Note: avoid cooking in aluminum or iron pots because tomatoes react with those substances, giving the dish a metallic taste.

Tomatoes can also be dehydrated.

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