

## Gazpacho

Serve this cold soup on a hot summer day!

2 large fresh tomatoes, peeled and cored  
1 large cucumber, halved  
1 green pepper, halved and seeded  
1 medium onion, peeled and halved  
3 cups tomato juice  
½ cup red wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce (like Tabasco)  
¼ teaspoon salt  
⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper  
3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced

In a blender or food processor, puree half the cucumber, 1 tomato, half the green pepper, half the onion and 1 cup tomato juice. Pour puree into a large bowl and add the remaining tomato juice, vinegar, oil, pepper sauce, salt, pepper and garlic. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Chop the remaining vegetables, cover and refrigerate until serving time. Just before serving, stir chopped vegetables into the puree. Serve chilled.

Makes about 6 servings

## Microwave Tomato Zucchini Parmesan\*

5 fresh, medium-sized tomatoes, chopped  
1½ cups chopped green pepper  
1 cup chopped onion  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
4½ cups zucchini, sliced  
2 teaspoons salt  
⅛ teaspoon pepper  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
2 tablespoons water  
grated Parmesan cheese

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Mix green pepper, onion, garlic and oil in a three-quart bowl, cover with lid or vented plastic wrap and microwave at high setting for 3 minutes. Stir; microwave at high setting for 3 minutes or until tender. Stir in tomatoes, zucchini, salt and pepper, cover and microwave at high setting for 8 minutes. Stir; microwave for 7 minutes. Remove cover and microwave 5 minutes. In a small bowl, blend cornstarch and water. Add to vegetables and stir. Microwave uncovered at high setting for 2 minutes or until thickened. Cover and let stand 5 minutes. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese and serve.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

\*This recipe could also be prepared on a rangetop using a stir-fry technique.

Stop at your county extension center for more information. Ask for GH 1456, "Canning Tomatoes," GH 1503, "Freezing Vegetables," GH 1563, "How to Dry Foods at Home," and GH 1459, "Pack a Pickled Product."

Logo designed by Jeanne Bintzer

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# Tomatoes



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For best quality, select tomatoes that are plump, heavy for their size and free from bruises and other defects. Ripe tomatoes are completely red or reddish-orange, depending on the variety, and give slightly to gentle palm pressure. Avoid tomatoes that are overly ripe and soft.

Mature, unripe tomatoes can be ripened at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, but flavor development will not be as good as vine-ripened tomatoes. The ripening process can be speeded up by placing tomatoes in a bag or ripening bowl. Missouri-grown tomatoes are available ripe and at peak quality throughout the summer.

Because they contain high amounts of water and fiber, delectable tomatoes are low in calories—a medium sized, raw tomato furnishes less than 30 calories. Tomatoes are also a good source of vitamins C and A.

Tomatoes can be eaten fresh or preserved for use in family meals throughout the year. Versatile tomatoes are tops on the home canner's list as they can be canned whole or stewed, as juice, sauce, paste, catsup and even in relishes and sweet spreads!

**Caution: Select only firm ripe tomatoes for canning. It is not safe to can tomatoes that are over-ripe, soft, moldy or picked from dead vines because they are less acid.**

Tomatoes that are too ripe for safe canning, but still sound and free from decay, can be frozen. Drying is also a good way to preserve part of an abundant crop after canning jars and freezer are full.

## Using and Preserving Tomatoes

### Fresh Facts

- Refrigerate ripe tomatoes for up to a week. Longer storage results in flavor and nutrient loss.

- Peel and slice tomatoes just before using to preserve their natural juiciness, flavor and nutrients.
- Peel tomatoes quickly without juice loss by dipping for 30-seconds in boiling water and quickly plunging into ice water. Skins will slip off easily.
- Slicing fresh tomatoes lengthwise, rather than crosswise, will help retain juice.

### Canned Facts

- Canning procedures for tomatoes and tomato products have been updated for safety over the last several years. Check with your county extension center for free, up-to-date canning information.
- Tomatoes can safely be canned in a water bath canner with the addition of citric acid (readily available in supermarkets) or lemon juice.
- Make red and green tomatoes into pickles and relishes to add color and zest to winter meals.
- Open kettle canning of tomatoes, or any other food, is **not** safe.

### Freezer Facts

- Tomato skins toughen in the freezer and should be removed before tomatoes are frozen whole or sliced.
- Prepare a large batch of your favorite basic tomato sauce at the height of the season when tomatoes are at peak flavor. Freeze sauce in meal-sized portions for use in pizza, lasagna and spaghetti throughout the winter months.
- For safety and best quality, thaw frozen tomatoes in the refrigerator.
- Frozen tomatoes can be added to soups, stews and sauces without being thawed.



### Dried Facts

- For the best quality, choose firm-ripe, bright red tomatoes that are thick-walled and heavy for their size.
- Dried tomatoes can be stored in an airtight container in a dark, cool, dry area for two to three months.
- Dried, thinly sliced tomato chips, served with a dip made from cottage cheese, yogurt and flavorings, are a nutritious, low calorie snack.
- Dried tomatoes can be chopped in a blender or food processor and used like stewed tomatoes in soups, sauces and casseroles. They are not, however, suitable for use in raw salads.
- Use a blender or food processor to make dried tomatoes into a fine powder that can be reconstituted and used in place of tomato sauce and paste.

## Recipes

### Quick 'N Fresh Ideas

- Stuff fresh, whole tomatoes with egg, chicken or seafood salad, top with low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt and sprinkle with sesame or sunflower seeds for a quick lunch.
- Chop fresh tomatoes and serve atop tacos or a bowl of chili.
- For extra color and flavor, add quartered tomatoes to any stir-fry combination. For the best texture and flavor, add tomatoes just before removing from the heat.
- Add tomato slices to grilled cheese sandwiches for a new taste appeal.
- Guacamole dip is more colorful topped with diced, fresh tomatoes.
- Remove core, halve crosswise or slice, dot with butter or margarine if desired, top with fresh herbs, grated cheese or chives and broil, bake or microwave tomatoes.

