

Cherry Tomatoes

How do tomatoes grow?

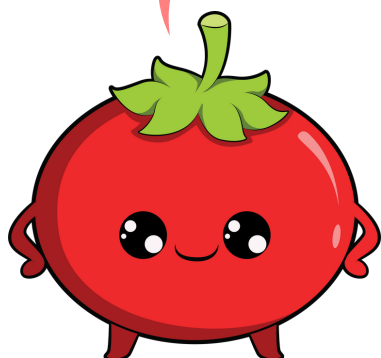
Tomatoes grow on a vine and can be eaten raw, cooked, roasted, sun dried or in soup! It is believed that there are over 25000 different varieties of tomatoes! Cherry tomatoes are small round varieties of tomatoes that are tasty to snack on.

Tomatoes technically are considered a fruit. They fit the scientific definition of fruit as they form from a flower and contain seeds. However, we cook and use tomatoes like a vegetable.

Even though we have frosty winters, we can grow tomatoes in Ontario for 10 months of the year, thanks to greenhouses. Once spring hits we can start growing delicious Ontario field tomatoes. Tomatoes are easy to grow in backyard gardens or pots too!



Knowledge is knowing that tomatoes are a fruit. Wisdom is knowing that they don't belong in a fruit salad



Where did they come from?

The first tomatoes were found growing in South America and in the Andes Mountains near Peru. Can you find those mountains on a map? You can still find wild tomato plants in Peru today!

Farmers in what is now Mexico cultivated (farmed) the wild plant. In the early 1500's, explorers from Spain were introduced to tomatoes and shared them with The Phillipines, The Carribean and Europe.

While some people enjoyed eating tomatoes in Europe, some people wrongly believed they were poisonous! In 1692, a cookbook with tomato recipes was published in Italy, and tomatoes started becoming more popular. Today, tomatoes are used in a variety of dishes around the world.

Did you know?

- It's best to store tomatoes on the counter, not in the fridge. Storing tomatoes in the fridge can impact their flavour and texture.
- Leamington (near Windsor, Ontario) is the Tomato Capital of Canada. They produce half of the tomatoes grown in Canada.
- Canadian farmers planted 15,515 acres of field tomatoes in 2020, producing 542,570 tonnes of tomatoes. Tomatoes grown in Canada are exported around the world. The top 5 countries Canada exports tomatoes to are the United States, Japan, Taiwan, China and Jamaica.
- In Spain they hold an annual festival called La Tomatina. This festival is the worlds biggest tomato fight; they celebrate by throwing tomatoes at each other.

- Tomatoes can be processed into lots of different foods including tomato paste (which is then used to make ketchup, soups, and sauces), whole canned tomatoes, and tomato juice. The first cannery in Ontario for processing tomatoes was opened in 1870.

Joke Corner

- What did the papa tomato say to the baby tomato? "Hurry and ketchup!"
- How do you fix a broken tomato? Tomato paste!
- What's a tomato's favorite dance? The salsa!

Let's Get Cooking! Bryschetta

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried basil or oregano
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) vegetable oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 loaf of whole wheat Italian crusty bread -
60 mL (1/4 cup) parmesan cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix together the tomato, garlic, onion, basil/oregano, oil. Add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Preheat the broiler on the oven to low/medium. Slice the bread into 8 slices and toast both sides of each slice of bread under the broiler. Watch carefully to avoid burning.
3. Spoon the tomato mixture over the top and sprinkle the parmesan cheese over the tomato mixture.
4. Heat under the broiler until the cheese is lightly browned. Enjoy!

