

You Say Tomato, I Say Tomahto. Camerota's Cupboard August 2011

Tomatoes are welcome in almost any dish. Fragrant herbs such as basil, oregano, dill, parsley and thyme are wonderful seasonings for tomatoes, and more pungent spices like curry powder, cumin, or chili powder also blend well into tomato-based sauces. This lovely fruit/vegetable is delicious stuffed with rice, feta, pine nuts and vegetables too.

Tomatoes are a rich source of vitamins A and C and the potent phytochemical lycopene, one of the few dietary sources of that cancer-fighting antioxidant. Some studies suggest that lycopene especially helps to protect against **prostate cancer**. Lycopene is found in red or pink fruits such as watermelon, papaya, pink guava and pink grapefruit as well as in tomatoes. Antioxidants can help protect against the kind of damage that gets cancer started, and the antioxidant nature of compounds within tomatoes has long been known.

Recent studies suggest that tomatoes may help combat cancer in additional ways, at later stages of the process. In the laboratory, tomato components have stopped the proliferation of several cancer cell types, including breast, lung and endometrium. Tomatoes have attracted particular attention from **prostate cancer** researchers because lycopene and its related compounds tend to concentrate in tissues of the **prostate**.

The best tomatoes are vine-ripened and deeply colored. They should feel heavy for their size. Unripe tomatoes can be ripened in a paper bag at room temperature. **Do not refrigerate** fresh tomatoes because their texture will become mealy and their taste watery.

Tomatoes come in so many varieties that they are always abundant. Most of us think that only fresh, local summer tomatoes have the taste we remember from childhood. There are cherry tomatoes, even smaller grape tomatoes and oval-shaped Roma tomatoes. Yellow or green tomatoes have a slightly different taste,

and farmers' markets have begun to offer dozens of heirloom varieties such as green zebra and cherokee purple. Both recipes this month and the nutritional information about them are from a recent AICR (American Institute for Cancer Research) newsletter.

Stuffed Tomatoes with Feta and Pine Nuts

Question for August: What to do with all some of those abundant tomatoes? Stuff them! Any large, firm tomato will work in this recipe.

Nonstick cooking spray
1 Tbsp. pine nuts
4 large, ripe tomatoes
3/4 cup cooked brown rice
1 green bell pepper, seeded and minced
1/2 cup yellow squash, finely chopped
4 Tbsp. feta cheese, crumbled
1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. fresh oregano, minced
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, minced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a shallow baking pan with cooking spray and set aside.
- In small skillet, toast pine nuts over medium heat for 2 minutes until golden brown, shaking pan frequently. Set aside.
- Slice off stem end (top) of tomatoes. Using a spoon, gently scoop out pulp. Finely chop pulp and place 1/3 cup of pulp in a large bowl (discard any remaining pulp).
- Add rice to pulp along with toasted pine nuts, bell pepper, yellow squash, 2 tablespoons of feta, minced onion, oregano, basil, salt and black pepper. Mix well. Stuff rice mixture into tomato shells. Transfer tomatoes to pan and top with remaining feta

cheese. Bake 20 minutes, until top is golden. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Information: Per serving: 120 calories, 4 g. total fat (2 g. saturated fat), 18 g. carbohydrate, 4 g. protein, 5 g. dietary fiber, 119 mg. sodium.

In presenting the following recipe, AICR provided nutritional benefits for each ingredient:

Add a refreshing taste twist to veggie burgers, fish and poultry with this summertime salsa. Now abundant, August is peach month. Peaches are a good source of vitamin C, beta-carotene (the precursor to vitamin A) and a small amount of the phytochemicals lutein and zeaxanthin. and tomatoes. Raw tomatoes are an excellent source of vitamins A and C and a good source of vitamin K, plus beta-carotene as well as lycopene which may protect against **prostate cancer**. Lycopene is especially concentrated in processed tomato products such as tomato sauce, paste and juice. Tomatoes are rich in flavor, low in calories, and also supply natural cancer-fighting phytochemicals and vitamins.

Although all bell peppers are an excellent source of vitamin C, yellow peppers are the variety highest in the nutrient, providing almost six times the recommended Daily Value per large pepper.

Also known as scallions, green onions are in the allium vegetable family with their bigger cousins, from Vidalia to white and yellow onions, garlic and chives. Onions may help prevent stomach cancer and contain anti-cancer phytochemicals called organosulfides and quercetin.

Citrus fruits are a good source of vitamin C and flavonoid phytochemicals

A healthy fat, olive oil is largely monounsaturated and may help lower “bad” cholesterol (low density lipoprotein, or LDL). It contains 119 calories per tablespoon.

Fresh spearmint contains flavonoid phytochemicals.

Peach and Tomato Salsa

2 large ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and cut into 1-inch chunks
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1/2 cup grape tomatoes, sliced in quarters
1/4 cup thinly chopped green onions
2 Tbsp. lime juice (about 1 lime)
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp. freshly chopped mint leaves

Place peaches, yellow pepper, tomatoes and green onion in medium sized bowl. Add lime juice and olive oil; mix thoroughly. Let salsa marinate for up to 1 hour. Sprinkle with mint before serving.

Makes 6 servings.

Nutrient Information Per serving: 70 calories, 5 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 8 g carbohydrates, 1 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 0 mg sodium.

After reading last month's column, **Dressings for Success**, PCIG member Tom Zenge, an amateur home cook who, after retiring, studied at the Culinary Institute at Cincinnati State, offered the following tips:

1. Using 100% EVOO may make the dressing a bit strong for some. I also make my own vinaigrette, and usually use 50% EVOO and 50% Canola oil (also healthy).
2. Using an immersion (stick) blender is an exceptionally easy way to create the emulsion, if you happen to have a stick blender. I find the dressing does not separate as easily as using a whisk.

Thanks, Tom! I love hearing from readers.

