

LEARN



facts

- Spanish translation: *El tomate* • Hmong translation: *Txiv Lws Suav/Txiv Lws Liab*
- Tomatoes are native to Mexico and the Andean regions of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia in South America. The Incas and Aztecs have cultivated these plants since 700 AD.
- The word "tomato" comes from the Aztec language. The Nahuatl word *tomatl* means "something round and plump". When tomatoes were first introduced to Europe, the French called them "the apple of love" and the Germans called them "the apple of paradise." Italians refer to the tomato as "pomodoro" which translates as "golden apple".
- Tomatoes are technically fruits since they contain the plant's seeds. However, in 1893 the United States Supreme Court ruled the tomato is a vegetable.
- Tomatoes come in many varieties, including cherry, grape, beefsteak, plum, slicing, and pear. Tomatoes are most commonly seen in shades of red, but orange, yellow, green, pink, and purple varieties exist too!
- Tomatoes are the most popular garden vegetable in America.



EAT



nutrition & seasonality

- **Key nutrients:**
 - Potassium - Helps maintain normal blood pressure.
 - Vitamin C - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.
- Tomatoes contain the antioxidant Lycopene which gives them their bright red color and may help prevent certain types of cancer.
- Fresh tomatoes grown in Wisconsin are available from mid-July through September.

TASTE



taste testing

Select several varieties of tomatoes for kids to try. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the tomatoes. Note observations on the board and discuss similarities and differences between the varieties. Is there a favorite?

You can also make a quick and easy fresh tomato salsa or Pico de Gallo. Dice a few tomatoes and add garlic, onions, peppers, cilantro, or basil and you have a perfect snack to eat with whole grain tortilla chips!



FUN



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

activity: The Five Senses

Objective: Kids will use all of their senses to explore foods, especially ones that are new or previously not favored.

Read book: *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child

Discussion: Talk about the five senses and how you can use all five when trying a new food.

- What does the food look like? (Describe color, shape, size)
- What does the food smell like? (Examples: sweet, earthy, floral)
- What does the food feel like? (Examples: smooth, bumpy, fuzzy, rough)
- What does the food sound like? (Examples: crunch, snap, sizzle)
- What does the food taste like? (Examples: sweet, salty, sour - try to be positive!)
- Why is it important to try new foods?

It is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables because they provide different nutrients to keep you healthy. Also, tastes change over time. A food you did not like last year might be your favorite food this year! Trying new foods does not mean that you need to eat the food if you do not like it. Use as many senses as you can to “observe” the food. Look at it, smell it, touch it, and maybe give it a small nibble if you are nervous to taste it.

— Credit: Jennifer Whitty, Health and Well-Being Extension Educator

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: Share a video of *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/taDxllhL3mU>

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds* by Jean Richards
- *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child
- *Little Yellow Pear Tomatoes* by Demian Yumen
- *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine* by Mari Schuh
- *Oh No Monster Tomato* by Jim Helmore and Karen Wall
- *Burnica's Tomatoes* by Gawri Manecuta



planting

Tomatoes can easily grow in the ground, raised beds, or pots. Tomato seeds are usually started indoors and then transplanted outside once the soil is warm and all danger of frost has passed. Tomatoes prefer full sun and well-drained soil. Some tomato plants can get up to 6 feet tall! It is important to provide support for your tomato plant, such as individual stakes, trellises, or cages.

harvesting

When tomatoes reach full color and they feel firm when gently squeezed, they are ready for picking!