

Red, Ripe, Juicy Tomatoes

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Produce for Better Health

(NAPSA)—Tomatoes, red, ripe and juicy, are one of America's favorite foods. Viewed by many health and nutrition experts as a powerful anti-aging, antioxidant-containing food, tomatoes are at their peak during the summer months. Lycopene, an antioxidant



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being studied for its disease-fighting capabilities, is present in tomatoes and gives them their brilliant red color.

Cooking breaks down the cell walls of tomatoes and frees the lycopene, making it easier for bodies to absorb and use. Other antioxidants found in tomatoes are the essential vitamins A and C. Based on a serving size of one medium tomato, tomatoes provide 20 percent of the Daily Value (DV) for vitamin A, and 40 percent DV for vitamin C. They are considered a good source of potassium as well.

Eating a colorful variety of delicious fruits and vegetables every day, as part of a healthy diet, is the best way to enjoy all of their disease-fighting benefits.

Dozens of tomato varieties are available; the most popular are the grape, the oval-shaped Bella Roma, and the large, round beefsteak. Enjoy round tomatoes in salads or sliced on sandwiches; try Bella Roma tomatoes made into sauces, sauteed with herbs or grilled; and toss sweet grape tomatoes into lunches or keep them handy to eat as a snack. Bella Roma di Pomodoro is an easy, richly flavored sauce that can be made in big batches and frozen. Just omit the parsley and basil and add these ingredients



when you serve the sauce. Available year-round, tomatoes should be firm, well-shaped, fragrant, and heavy for their size. Store ripe tomatoes at room temperature and use within a few days. Do not refrigerate.

For more about tomatoes and 5 A Day, visit www.sunripeproduce.com, www.5aday.org or www.aboutproduce.com.

Bella Roma di Pomodoro

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3 medium garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced

12 Bella Roma Italian style tomatoes, cut into chunks

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

1 lb. penne pasta

10 basil leaves, torn by hand into small pieces

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

In a large skillet, heat olive oil and saute garlic. Add Bella Roma tomatoes, salt and pepper. Simmer sauce for 10-15 minutes; do not overcook the tomatoes. Meanwhile cook pasta according to package directions. Spoon sauce over pasta and sprinkle with parsley and basil. Serves 6.

Nutritional information per serving: calories: 364, total fat: 8.3g, saturated fat: 1.3g, % calories from fat: 20%, % calories from saturated fat: 3%, protein: 12g, carbohydrates: 63g, cholesterol: 0mg, dietary fiber: 4g, sodium: 65mg.

Note to Editors: Seventy-sixth in a series of monthly 5-A-Day columns, with more stories featuring fruits and vegetables at www.napsnet.com and search: "Pivonka."