

# Tomatoes—No Refrigeration Required

(NAPSA)—Did you know that one of the most popular vegetables in the United States is actually a fruit? Categorized by botanists as a fruit but eaten by consumers as a vegetable, tomatoes are appreciated for their combination of sweetness and acidity.

Any way you slice it, tomatoes are a delicious way to add nutrients to the diet. They are rich in vitamins A and C and are a good source of potassium. Tomatoes are also naturally low in sodium and contain no cholesterol.

Many people store tomatoes alongside other vegetables in their refrigerator's crisper drawer, but that's not the best place for them. Tomatoes should be stored at room temperature to maintain maximum flavor. Cool temperatures inside your refrigerator will stop the ripening process and begin to decrease the flavor and change the texture. Try storing your tomatoes in a decorative bowl on the counter.

Tomatoes and bananas help each other ripen quicker. Tomatoes and bananas emit a naturally occurring ripening gas called ethylene and when you store the two together they both ripen rapidly. If you need to ripen a tomato quickly, store it in a closed paper bag on the counter. The ethylene gas speeds up the ripening process when confined around the fruit in a closed bag.

Although tomatoes are native to Central and South America, they are now eaten throughout the world and are an ingredient in countless recipes. Many people consider tomatoes an essential part of their vegetable gardens each summer and they are available at your



local market year-round.

For more information about tomatoes online, log on to [www.sunripeproduce.com](http://www.sunripeproduce.com). For more recipes and information on how to incorporate a variety of fruits and vegetables into your diet, visit [www.5aday.org](http://www.5aday.org).

## PICO DE GALLO

**Pico de Gallo is a fresh tomato salsa often served as a dip for tortilla chips but it's also terrific spooned onto grilled fish, chicken or pork.**

### Ingredients:

**8 SUNRIPE Bella Roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped**  
**¼ cup red onion, finely chopped**  
**2 jalapenos, minced**  
**½ cup cilantro, chopped**  
**Juice of ½ a lime**  
**½ teaspoon salt**  
**¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**

### Instructions:

**Mix all ingredients together and enjoy.**

**Serves: 8 – ½ cup of vegetables per serving**

**Nutrition Information per Serving:** calories: 15, total fat: 0.2g, saturated fat: 0.03g, % of calories from fat: 8, % of calories from saturated fat: 1, protein: 1g, carbohydrate: 3g, cholesterol: 0mg, dietary fiber: 1g, sodium 149mg.

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**Note to Editors:** Ninetieth in a series of columns by Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., president and CEO of Produce for Better Health Foundation. More stories at [www.napsnet.com](http://www.napsnet.com). Search: "Pivonka."