

SPOTLIGHT ON SUMMER FOODS

IT DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN TOMATO AND PEPPER

Little things can make a big difference in the food that we eat. Have you ever bitten into a tomato in the middle of the cold winter? The result tends to be pale, watery, and flavourless. Peak season tomatoes have the essence of mother nature's smile for a job well done. A common growing companion and often appearing in the same dishes, peppers can enhance the flavour and nutritional profile of tomato-based dishes. Experience the classic summer flavour and nutritional punch these seasonal foods can offer.

TOMATOES

FUN FACT: While it's not time to ditch the sunscreen, eating tomatoes regularly can help to defend your skin against harmful UV rays!

- ✓ Made up of 95% water, tomatoes are one of the most hydrating foods.
- ✓ They are naturally low in carbohydrates.
- ✓ One medium tomato can supply almost 30% of your RDI of Vitamin A - a nutrient that is vital for vision and cell health.
- ✓ They provide 28% of RDI for Vitamin C.
- ✓ A good source of potassium, tomatoes help to lower blood pressure and prevent cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ With a high lycopene content, tomatoes can help to protect against a variety of cancers, cardiovascular disease, and even aging!
- ✓ They are a dietary source of many vitamins and minerals including iron, folate, niacin, phosphorus, and manganese.

PEPPERS

- ✓ One of the richest sources of Vitamin C with 169% of your RDI.
- ✓ Contain Vitamin B6, which is important for red blood cell formation.
- ✓ Provide Vitamin E for healthy nerves and muscles.
- ✓ Red bell peppers are a good source of beta carotene, which converts into Vitamin A.
- ✓ Rich in antioxidant compounds, which vary from colour to colour. Antioxidants help to prevent free radical damage and are associated with an abundance of health benefits.
- ✓ Rich in iron and Vitamin C. When vitamin C is combined with iron, absorption is much more efficient. A great food for anemia and low iron.

FUN FACT: A bell pepper has 3 times more Vitamin C than an orange? It's true!

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SHOW OFF YOUR HARVEST

Relatively easy to grow, tomatoes and peppers can be found in most home gardens. They make good companions requiring the same soil, water, and climate and are often grown together. With a variety of colour and an abundance of protective nutrients, this combination is packed with beauty, flavour, and nutrition! This is what summer tastes like!

The Companion Salad

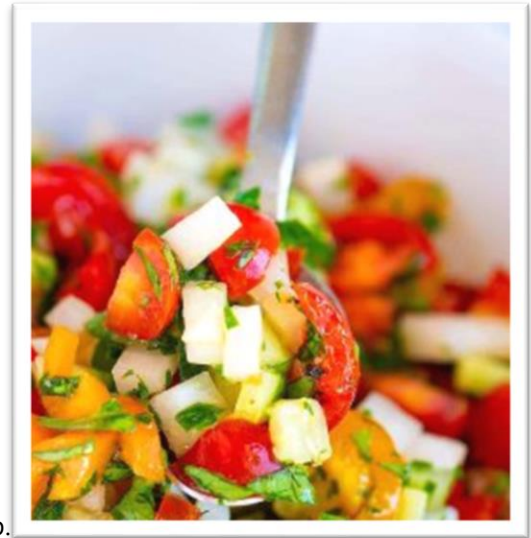
Harvest your bumper crop and serve up summer!

- 4 vine-ripened tomatoes
- 1 large red or sweet onion
- 1 large cucumber
- 2 bell peppers of different colours
- 1 tablespoon of Italian seasoning
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Red wine vinegar
- Sea salt & pepper
- Fresh basil (for garnish)

Directions: Cut the tomatoes, onion, cucumber, and bell peppers into bite-size pieces and place in a large bowl. Drizzle a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and red wine vinegar on top. Add Italian seasoning. Add a sprinkle of salt and pepper (or to taste) and mix well. Cover and refrigerate. Stir before serving. Serve chilled with fresh basil on top. Makes 4 servings.

Tip: Best if marinated overnight in the refrigerator to allow the flavours to come to the surface.

Nutrition Per Serving: Cal: 122 | Fat: 7.6g | Protein: 2.3g | Sodium: 131mg | Carbohydrate: 14.2g | Fibre: 3.2g | Sugar 4.8g
Adapted from: <http://healthfoodeating.blogspot.com/2011/07/summer-salads-recipe.html>



Sometimes, tomato and pepper plants can leave you with an overabundant supply. Don't let it go to waste. If your garden is producing more than your family and friends can handle, consider sharing your crops with those in need. Many food banks lack fresh fruits and vegetables and offer programs that will accept fresh produce. Call ahead to your local food bank, box up anything you can spare, and give the gift of nutrition to others!

Sources: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/bell-peppers#benefits>
<https://www.health.com/nutrition/health-benefits-tomatoes>
<https://foodstruct.com/compare/tomatoes-vs-oranges>