

# ☀ Tomatoes

**T**omatoes are probably one of the most popular summertime vegetables. A member of the nightshade family, tomatoes are closely related to potatoes, peppers, and eggplant.

There are many cultivated tomato varieties, including several heirlooms that have been grown for generations. Based on their size, shape, and color, tomatoes can be classified into one of several types: cherry, grape, beefsteak, plum (paste), slicing, or pear.

They are available mid-July through October in Wisconsin.

## Tips

**Buying**—Tomatoes should be well formed, smooth, and free of blemishes. Heirloom tomatoes will likely be more irregular in shape and color than the other varieties. Vine-ripened tomatoes will have a sweet aroma.

Avoid tomatoes that have bruises, green or yellow areas, large growth cracks, or water-soaked spots.



**Storing**—Do not refrigerate because it damages the fruit. To ripen, place in a paper bag out of direct sunlight.

Tomatoes can be frozen or dehydrated to preserve the sweet, succulent flavor for winter.

**Cooking**—Wash tomatoes in cold water and core. Peel if desired. To peel a tomato, rub the skin with the dull edge of a paring knife. The skin of a ripened tomato will bunch up and peel off easily.

## Uses

- ☀ Add to almost any kind of salad—pasta, grain, or green.
- ☀ Chop and mix with onion, chili pepper, and cilantro for a fresh salsa.

### Caprese salad

**3–4 fresh tomatoes, sliced**  
**½ lb. fresh mozzarella, sliced**  
**olive oil**  
**balsamic vinegar**  
**fresh basil leaves**

Alternate the tomato and mozzarella slices on a platter. Drizzle with olive oil and a splash of vinegar. Season with salt and pepper and garnish with fresh basil.

# Summer vegetables



**T**hese days, supermarkets provide year-round access to many vegetables. Despite this convenience, it's hard to beat the flavor and freshness of locally grown vegetables picked at the peak of ripeness.



This treat is only available for a limited time, so enjoy it while you can!



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# ☀️ Cabbage

**C**abbage dates back to 600 BC in Greece and was primarily used to treat gout, stomach problems, deafness, and headache. It is an excellent source of vitamin C, contains significant amounts of glutamine (an amino acid that has anti-inflammatory properties), and is a low-calorie food. Varieties include green, red, and Savoy, or crumpled-leaf.

Cabbage is a cool-season vegetable available in early summer and late fall.

## Tips

**Buying**—Select heavy, solid heads with few loose wrapper leaves. (Savoy cabbage leaves will appear looser in general.) The wrapper leaves should be clean and flexible, but not limp. Avoid purchasing cabbage heads that have been cut because as soon as the head is cut, it begins to lose its vitamin C.

**Storing**—Wait to wash cabbage until just prior to use. Uncut heads can be stored in the refrigerator with or without a plastic bag.

**Cooking**—To prepare cabbage, cut the head into quarters. Place one of the cut edges on the cutting board and slice to the desired thickness. Cutting cabbage with a carbon steel knife causes a reaction that turns green cabbage black and red cabbage blue, so it's best to use a stainless steel knife.

If you choose to cook cabbage, take care not to overcook it, as overcooking results in an overly strong flavor.



## Uses

- ☀️ Sauté or stir-fry with other vegetables.
- ☀️ Use red cabbage in pasta salads and green salads, or serve with fried rice.

### Coleslaw with cilantro and chives

- 4–6 c. shredded cabbage (green, red, or a combination)
- ¼ c. minced cilantro
- ¼ c. chopped chives
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt

Toss the cabbage, cilantro, and chives in a large bowl; cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.

Before serving, mix the oil, vinegar, sugar, and salt in a small bowl until well combined. Pour the dressing over the chilled cabbage mixture. Mix well just before serving.

—Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables, by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics

# ☀️ Eggplant

**T**he eggplant we enjoy today originated in India as a spiny plant with bitter fruit. Its name comes from early varieties of the fruit whose small, white, and round appearance resembled an egg.

There are several types of eggplant, including American (dark purple fruit); Italian (a smaller version with thinner skin and firmer flesh); Asian, or Japanese (long and slender); and Thai (small and round with green and white stripes and bitter seeds).

In Wisconsin, eggplant is available in August and September.

## Tips

**Buying**—Look for fruit that are firm, smooth skinned, and free of soft brown spots. Eggplants with wrinkled skin will be bitter, as will oversized fruit. The fruit should feel heavy for its size.

**Storing**—Eat eggplant as soon as possible after purchase, as it becomes bitter with time. Store eggplants whole in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

**Cooking**—Wash eggplant just before using and cut off the cap and stem. Peeling is optional and a matter of personal preference; large eggplants tend to have a tough skin. Once cut, the exposed inner surfaces will turn brown, but this will not affect the flavor.

Avoid using too much cooking oil because eggplant acts as a sponge and will soak up extra oil.



## Uses

- ☀️ Add to stews, casseroles, and stir-fries.
- ☀️ Grill with other vegetables or add to shish kebabs.

### Ratatouille

- 1½ tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 c. chopped onion
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small or medium eggplant, cubed
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ¾ tsp. basil
- ½ tsp. marjoram or oregano
- ¼ tsp. rosemary
- ¼ tsp. thyme
- 1 small or medium summer squash, cubed
- 1 bell pepper, cut into strips
- black pepper
- 3 tomatoes, coarsely chopped

Sauté garlic, onion, and bay leaf in olive oil. Add eggplant, salt, and herbs and cook, covered, until eggplant is soft, about 5–7 minutes. Add summer squash, bell pepper, black pepper, and tomatoes. Cover and cook until tomatoes and peppers are soft, about 10 minutes. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.

—Two Onion Farm, Belmont, WI