



Extension

HARVESTED GREEN TOMATOES

Fall 2022



At the end of the gardening season, when the weather turns cold, you may find yourself with some green tomatoes. They may be green, but they are culinary gold that you can turn into a surprising variety of preparations. Whether you choose to ripen them or use them green, you will be enjoying the fruits of your labor and the delicious dishes that you can make from growing tomatoes.

Types of Green Tomatoes

There are two types of green tomatoes: unripe red tomatoes and fully ripe green ones. These are generally heirloom varieties, like Green Zebras and Green Moldavians, which are distinguishable from unripe red tomatoes. Real green tomatoes often have vertical stripes or other variations in the coloring. They will feel soft when pressed and will taste much like a red tomato, possibly slightly sweet or spicy, depending on the variety.

Unripe red tomatoes that are green when ripe will be pale green all over, feel nearly solid, and will have a more acidic or tart flavor. Almost ripe (soft) green tomatoes may be ripened in a paper bag on the countertop.

Ripening Green Tomatoes

Sort and store fruit by colors that will ripen at similar speeds. Group fruit that are mature green, pink, light red, and entirely red but not soft. At the mature green stage, tomatoes are almost fully grown but do not yet show pink color. Cream-colored streaks are noticeable at the blossom end.



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Store tomatoes in boxes, 1 to 2 layers deep, or in plastic bags with a few holes for air circulation. Keep the tomatoes out of direct sunlight. Light is not needed to ripen the tomatoes. Check the tomatoes every few days to monitor the ripening. To slow ripening, sort out ripened fruits from green tomatoes each week. To speed up ripening, place green or partially ripe fruits in a bag or box with a ripe tomato.

Store ripening tomatoes at 60 - 70°F. Green, mature tomatoes stored within the temperature range will ripen in about two weeks. Refrigerator temperatures of 40°F are too cold to ripen mature green tomatoes and are colder than desired for ripe ones.

The quality of the end product will be better the sooner the green tomatoes can be processed or used. Unfortunately, tomatoes ripened indoors are not as flavorful as vine-ripened fruits. However, compared to store bought, you will be delighted with your own home ripened tomatoes.

Cooking with Green Tomatoes

Green tomatoes are low in calories, about 30 per half cup serving. They are an excellent source of vitamin C. They also contain dietary fiber, vitamin A, potassium, iron, calcium, magnesium, and other minerals.

If you prefer to use the tomatoes when they are green and are looking for some recipes, there are several to choose from, including fried green tomatoes, green tomato pie, green tomato bread, and green tomato relish. Green tomatoes can be used raw, fried, sautéed, or cooked in sauces and meat stews.



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Green tomatoes can be preserved. Follow USDA's Complete Guide to Home Canning directions for canning tomato and tomato products, including the acidification and altitude adjustment. The free publication can be downloaded from the National Center for Home Food Preservation website at https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html.

Try these easy green tomato recipes:

Cajun Grilled Green Tomatoes with Cajun Dip

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 3 to 4 large green tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon Cajun blackening rub
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons hot sauce



Instructions:

- Heat grill. Put a grill screen on the grill to heat up.
- Wash tomatoes under cold running water. Cut tomatoes into 1/2-inch thick slices. Coat slices with oil and sprinkle with Cajun blackening rub and salt; set aside.
- Mix sour cream, mayonnaise, and hot sauce in a bowl until blended; set aside.
- Coat grill screen with oil; place tomato slices on the screen and cook uncovered until browned, about 6 minutes, flipping halfway through.
- Serve grilled tomato slices topped with dollops of Cajun mayonnaise.

Sources:

National Center for Home Food Preservation; North Carolina Cooperative Extension; United States Department of Agriculture; University Of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service



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Crunchy "Baked" Fried Green Tomatoes

Ingredients:

4 large firm green tomatoes
1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour, divided
1 teaspoon Kosher salt, more for sprinkling
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs
Cooking spray or olive oil for drizzling



Instructions:

- Slice tomatoes 1/8-inch thick.
- On a large plate mix flour, salt, and pepper.
- Place yogurt and buttermilk in a bowl and mix well. Put Panko bread crumbs on a plate. Coat tomatoes with the flour mixture, then the yogurt–buttermilk mixture, then the Panko bread crumbs.
- Place coated tomatoes on a cookie sheet and spray with cooking spray liberally on both sides or drizzle them on both sides with olive oil.
- Bake in a 350°F oven for about 7 minutes on one side then flip them over and bake for another 5 to 7 minutes.
- Transfer to a platter, sprinkle with extra salt, and serve warm.

Read more at: <https://lenoir.ces.ncsu.edu/2014/07/what-is-a-green-tomato-unripe-red-or-its-very-own-variety/>



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Basic Fried Green Tomatoes

Ingredients:

1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup self-rising cornmeal mix*
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
3 medium-size, firm green tomatoes, cut into 1/3-inch-thick slices (about 1 1/4 pound)
Oil for frying
Salt, optional or to taste



Instructions:

- Whisk together egg and buttermilk in a shallow bowl.
- Combine cornmeal mix, salt, pepper, and 1/4 cup flour in a shallow dish.
- Dredge tomato slices in remaining 1/4 cup flour; dip in egg mixture, and dredge in cornmeal mixture.
- Pour oil to a depth of 1/2-inch in a large cast-iron skillet; heat to 375°F over medium-high heat.
- Drop tomatoes, in batches, into hot oil, and cook for 2 minutes on each side or until golden.
- Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle hot tomatoes with salt to taste.

*If self-rising cornmeal mix is unavailable, you can make your own. Combine the following ingredients in a bowl and mix well.

1 3/4 cups cornmeal finely ground if possible
6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoons salt sea salt or table salt

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Green Tomato Parmesan

Ingredients:

2 pounds medium green tomatoes, cut into 1/2-inch slices
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
4 egg whites
3 Tablespoons flour
1 1/2 cups dry whole wheat bread crumbs
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons dried basil
3 cups spaghetti sauce
1 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
2 cups part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded



Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place tomato slices in a single layer on paper towels; sprinkle with salt.

Let stand for 5 minutes; pat dry.

In a shallow bowl, whisk egg whites until foamy. Place flour in a separate shallow bowl.

In another shallow bowl, combine breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, and basil.

Coat tomato slices in flour, then dip in egg whites and coat with breadcrumb mixture.

- Place on greased baking sheets. Bake, uncovered, 35-40 minutes or until lightly browned, turning once.
 - Spread 1 1/2 cups spaghetti sauce into a greased 11 x 7-in. baking dish. Top with half of the tomatoes and spread with ricotta cheese. Sprinkle with 1 1/2 cups mozzarella cheese.
- Layer with remaining tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, and mozzarella cheese.
- Bake, uncovered, 30 minutes or until bubbly. Add cheese and bake until melted. If you like serve over whole-grain spaghetti noodles or spaghetti squash.



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Green Tomato Salsa Verde

Ingredients:

2 pounds firm, green tomatoes, cored and quartered
1 medium-sized yellow onion, chopped
1 fresh green Anaheim (or other large, mildly-flavored) chili pepper, stem and seeds removed, quartered
3-4 green jalapeño chilies, stems removed, quartered
3 garlic cloves, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
1 Tablespoon olive oil
3 Tablespoons water
½ teaspoon fresh lemon zest
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey or sugar
⅓ cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped



Instructions:

Combine the green tomatoes, onion, chili peppers, garlic, salt, cumin, olive oil, and water in a stockpot.

Bring to a boil and cook covered on medium-low heat for approximately ten minutes, stirring occasionally. Add more water only if needed to maintain the most minimal broth.

Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, honey (or sugar), and cilantro and simmer for an additional five minutes. Taste the mixture and adjust the seasoning, if needed, by adding more lemon juice, honey, and/or salt, to taste.

Spoon the mixture (in batches if necessary) into the container of a food processor or blender and pulse until the salsa reaches the consistency you prefer, either chunky or a smooth puree. Makes approximately one quart of salsa, which should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. This recipe may be doubled or tripled.

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Issued in furtherance of extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kelly Crane, Director, University of Wyoming Extension, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming Extension, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

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