

# TOMATOES



## *Featured Food for Early Fall*

Tomatoes, first called the tomatal, originated from Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador and were cultivated by the Aztecs and Incas as early as 700 AD. Tomatoes come in a wide range of colors and patterns including white, purple, mottled and striped. Varieties include beefsteak, big boy, purple haze and, mortgage lifter, popular in the 1930s.

## *Earth Story*

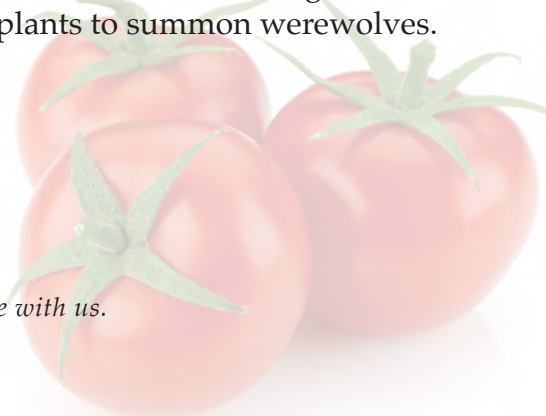
While there are more than 7,500 varieties, tomatoes are clearly categorized as either heirlooms or hybrids. Heirlooms, also known as heritage tomatoes, have been naturally cultivated, using the same family of seeds over generations. Hybrids are the result of forced cross-pollination with other varieties. The origin of the popular cherry tomato is a subject of fierce debate. One claim is that they first grew wild alongside their larger counterparts in South America.

## *Nutritional Benefits*

Tomatoes are rich in vitamins and minerals, especially A, C, K, biotin, copper, potassium and manganese. Tomatoes also contain molybdenum, an essential antioxidant that fuels the brain, nervous system and liver. Tomatoes are a well-known source of lycopene, a potent antioxidant that can help decrease the risks of breast and prostate cancers, heart disease and osteoporosis. Orange and tangerine colored tomatoes contain as much or more lycopene than red tomatoes.

## *Fun Facts*

Europeans were afraid of tomatoes whose acidity caused lead from pewter flatware to leach into food, poisoning and killing many. Poorer Europeans enjoyed tomatoes, because they used wooden versus lead-based flatware. Tomatoes were also known as wolf peaches, because according to German folklore, witches and sorcerers used tomatoes and other nightshade plants to summon werewolves.



*Ask your chef for specific recipes and share your culinary experience with us.*