

# FRUIT/VEGETABLE OF THE MONTH!

## AUGUST'S FEATURED VEGGIE IS THE TOMATO

### TOMATO FACTS:

The tomato is a member of the nightshade family. It was first discovered in South America. While the tomato is technically a fruit, it is typically eaten and prepared like a vegetable. The tomato is often served as part of a salad or main course of a meal, rather than as a dessert.

Tomatoes are loaded with a nutrient called **lycopene**. Lycopene gives them their bright red color and helps protect them from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. In much the same way, lycopene can help protect your cells from sun damage. Tomatoes are also a great source of vitamins C and K, potassium, and folate.

Tomatoes come in many colors including yellow, orange, green, and purple. Tomatoes also exist in different shapes and flavors.

The tomato is the state vegetable of New Jersey, the state fruit of Ohio, and the state fruit and vegetable of Arkansas. Tomato juice has been the official beverage of Ohio since 1965.

### Ways to enjoy tomatoes:

- eat them raw
- cooked in sauces
- added to salads
- blended in drinks or tomato juice



### HEALTH BENEFITS OF EATING TOMATOES:

**Immune System** - The **Lycopene** in tomatoes offers protection from environmental toxins and chronic diseases such as breast and prostate cancer.

**Heart** - **Lycopene** may also help lower your levels of LDL, or "bad" cholesterol and blood pressure. Eating lycopene rich foods like tomatoes, promotes a heart healthy lifestyle.

**Blood Vessels** - Getting more tomatoes into your diet may improve the function of blood vessels in people with cardiovascular disease.

**Eyes** - Tomatoes may help keep your eyes from feeling tired and ease headaches from eyestrain. They also help protect your eyes from the blue light made by digital devices.

**Digestion** - Tomatoes may keep the digestive system healthy by preventing both constipation and diarrhea. They also effectively remove toxins from the body.

### RECIPE: HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE

Prep: 20 mins      Cook: 2 hrs mins  
Servings: 6

#### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 3 leaves fresh basil or 3 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

#### Directions

1. In a large saucepan, over medium-high heat, saute onions in the oil until golden brown.
2. Add crushed tomatoes, water, tomato paste, basil, garlic, salt and pepper.
3. Let the sauce come to a boil,
4. Turn heat to low and stir occasionally until desired thickness.
5. Sauce is ready when oil rises to the top. Skim off oil.

