

News Article for Week of: September 1, 2011

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Kentucky Tomatoes

Tomatoes are a Kentucky garden favorite! With the dry weather, enjoy them while you can, and try as many varieties as possible. At the recent Allen County Farmer's Market "taste challenge", customers chose the Cherokee Purple Heirloom tomato variety as their favorite flavorful tomato for slicing. It's not the most beautiful tomato – often cracked split on top – but inside you can't beat the sweet, meaty texture and flavor! Other varieties are equally good, especially for other purposes. The Roma tomato is an excellent multipurpose "meaty" tomato that holds its shape for canning and slicing for salads.

Rutgers, Beefsteak, and Mountain Spring are delicious red tomatoes that slice great for burgers or sides! Or maybe you like lower acid varieties such as the yellow Mountain Gold or Pink Lady – all equally tasty for summer meals. The point is to select different tomatoes for your specific purpose. You may find a new favorite!

When selecting tomatoes, choose those with bright, shiny skins and firm flesh.

Store tomatoes at room temperature (above 55 degrees) until they have fully ripened. This will allow them to ripen properly and develop good flavor and aroma. Try to store tomatoes out of direct sunlight otherwise they will ripen unevenly. Use within one week after ripened. Cold temperatures damage tomatoes. Tomatoes taste best if not refrigerated; refrigerate only if you can't use them before they spoil.

Tomatoes are nutritious. A medium size tomato contains 25 calories, and 20 mg of sodium. Tomatoes are fat and cholesterol free, high in vitamins A and C, and a great source of potassium.

Liven up a summer get together with this delicious dip!

Bacon and Tomato Dip

1 cup fat free sour cream

1 cup lowfat mayonnaise

2 large tomatoes, diced, reserve excess juice

4 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Directions:

Combine all ingredients.

Add reserved tomato juice until dip reaches desired consistency.

Serve with fresh vegetables or reduced fat crackers.

Yield: 16, 2 tablespoon servings.

Nutrition Analysis: 50 calories; 3 g fat; 1 g saturated fat; 5 mg cholesterol; 160 mg sodium; 6 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 1 g protein.

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