### Tomatoes

#### Quick Facts

- Tomatoes are very rich in the antioxidant lycopene. High levels of lycopene have been shown to reduce the risk of stroke and decrease the risk of some cancers.
- Cooked tomatoes have a stronger impact on lycopene levels in blood compared to raw tomatoes or tomato juice.
- Tomatoes contain high amounts of vitamin C, vitamin A, iron, potassium, and vitamin B-6.
- Tomatoes are a great low-calorie snack! Since they are also high in dietary fiber they can help keep you fuller longer between meals.

#### Shopping & Preparing

Fresh tomatoes can be found at any grocery store in the produce area. There are many different types of tomatoes – over 25,000 varieties according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture! The most common type of tomato you will find in a grocery store is a globe tomato – they are smooth, round and medium to large size. You may also find cherry tomatoes, which are small, round and only contain two cells inside. Beefsteak tomatoes are pretty large and usually wider than they are tall (as opposed to round). Plum tomatoes, like Roma, are elongated and generally smooth. However, if you choose to grow tomatoes in your own garden – the possibilities could be endless!

When buying tomatoes, look for those that are deeply colored and firm. If you don’t feel too weird about it, smell the tomatoes that you have selected. You want to find ones that smell sweet and woody. If you are buying grape tomatoes, leave behind any that have wrinkles. Just like people, these are a sign of age! Once home, store tomatoes at room temperature on a plate, never in a plastic bag. You will have to use the fresh tomatoes within two to three days after purchasing.

#### Super Recipe – Grilled Tomatoes With Basil Vinaigrette

**Serving Size**

- Makes 6 servings

**Ingredients**

- 3 yellow tomatoes
- 3 red tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
Garnish: fresh basil sprigs

Preparation

1. Cut tomatoes in half; thread onto skewers, alternating colors.
2. Brush with 1 tablespoon oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Grill, covered with grill lid, over medium heat (300°F to 350°F) for 10 minutes. Turn skewers often.
4. Combine remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, vinegar and basil; drizzle over kabobs.
5. Garnish, if desired.

Nutritional Information Per Serving

- 87 calories
- 7.2g fat
- 0mg cholesterol
- 109mg sodium

Resources

http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/tasty-tomato-antioxidant-power-blast
http://www.livestrong.com/article/408302-tomato-health-benefits/