

Cooking Corner

Tips To Help You

Fresh Tomatoes Bring Color to One-Pot Dinners

(NAPS)—The vibrant red color and juicy-good flavor of fresh tomatoes instantly perk up “all in ones” such as main-course salads, skillet meals, soups, stews and pasta dishes. After one bite of warm Tomato and Beef Ratatouille Salad or Penne with Fresh Tomato Sauce, you’ll be a believer.

Fresh tomatoes from Florida are plentiful during the months when many other fruits and vegetables are “hibernating” or in short supply. Along with their glowing good looks and sunny taste, tomatoes pack a notable nutrition punch. Lycopene, the same substance that gives tomatoes their redness, is a powerful antioxidant believed to help protect against certain cancers and heart disease.

Ripen fresh tomatoes at room temperature, stem side up, until they turn red and feel slightly soft to the touch.



WARM TOMATO AND BEEF RATATOUILLE SALAD

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup green or red bell pepper cut in 1-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 2 cups eggplant and/or zucchini cut in ½-inch cubes
- 1-½ pounds fully ripened fresh Florida tomatoes cut in chunks (about 3 cups)
- 8 ounces sliced deli roast beef, cut in strips
- 3 tablespoons prepared Italian-style salad dressing
- 4 cups lightly packed lettuce leaves torn into bite-sized pieces

In a large skillet, over medium-high heat, heat oil until hot. Add onion, bell pepper and garlic; cook and stir until tender, about 3 minutes. Add eggplant; cook and stir

On a dreary day, a warm tomato and beef ratatouille salad hits the spot. This quick ratatouille could also be served over noodles or rice.

until almost tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, until eggplant is tender, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in roast beef and salad dressing. In a large salad bowl, combine vegetables and beef mixture with lettuce; toss until well combined.

YIELD: 4 portions

PENNE WITH FRESH TOMATO SAUCE

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 pounds fully ripened fresh Florida tomatoes, coarsely chopped (about 5 cups)
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

- 6 ounces crumbled feta cheese (about ¾ cup)
- 8 ounces penne pasta (about 4 cups)

In a large skillet, over medium-high heat, heat oil and butter. Add onion; cook and stir until golden, about 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Cook and stir until tomatoes soften, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions; drain. Add pasta and feta to skillet; gently toss with Fresh Tomato Sauce.

YIELD: 4 portions

You’ll find more information and recipes at floridatomatoes.org. For a free recipe leaflet, send a self-addressed, stamped business-sized envelope to: Florida Tomato Committee, PO Box 140635, Orlando, FL 32814-0635.