SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

Week 1: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z
Week 2: Tomatoes Grow on a Vine
Week 3: Tasting an Exploring Tomatoes
Week 4: Tomato Discovery Lab

Optional Activities

Books

*Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z*
by Lois Ehlert

*Tomatoes Grow on a Vine* by Mari Schuh

NEWSLETTERS

For families

For teachers
# Tomatoes

Week 1: Exploring Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z

## MATERIALS
- Plant Parts Diagram
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Photo Cards
- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by Lois Ehlert

## LEARNING STANDARDS

### Head Start Learning Domains
- Language Development (Receptive, Expressive)
- Literacy Knowledge & Skills (Book Appreciation & Alphabet Knowledge)
- Social & Emotional (Social Relationships)
- Mathematics & Knowledge Skills (Number Concepts and Quantities, Geometry & Spatial Sense, Measurement & Comparison)
- Physical Development & Health (Health Knowledge & Practice, Gross Motor Skills)
- Science Knowledge & Skills (Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural & Physical World)
- Logic & Reasoning (Reasoning & Problem Solving)
- English Language Development (Expressive & Receptive English Language Skills, Engagement in English Literacy Activities)

### DRDP-2015

- Approaches to Learning-Self Regulation; ATL-REG1
- Language and Literacy Development; LLD1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
- English Language Development; ELD1, 3
- Cognition-Math & Science; COG9, 10, 11
- Physical Development-Health; PD-HLTH 10
- History-Social Science; HSS5

## LESSON

1) Show children the tomato photo card and tell them we are going to learn about tomatoes this month. Ask if anyone has ever eaten tomatoes before.

2) Read the book *Eating the Alphabet.*

3) As you read the book, ask the class questions about the fruits and vegetables in the book such as:

   - What colors of fruits and vegetables do you see?
   - Who has eaten a fruit today? Which one(s)?
   - Who has eaten a vegetable today? Which one(s)?
   - What is your favorite fruit or vegetable? What color(s) is it?
   - Where do these fruits and vegetables come from? Where can you buy them?

   Make sure that *farmers’ markets* or *farms* are mentioned. A farmers market is an outdoor market where farmers sell fruits and vegetables they have just picked at their farm. Emphasize that although we can find these foods in stores, they are *fresher* and *taste better* when they come directly from farmers.

4) Explain that fruits and vegetables are an important to eat to keep our bodies healthy. Discuss with the class how we eat different parts of the plants. Use a Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Photo Card for each vegetable or fruit you mention and the Plant Parts Diagram to discuss how:

   - Sometimes we eat the *root* (such as beets, carrots, radishes)
   - Sometimes we eat the *flower* (such as broccoli and cauliflower)
   - Sometimes we eat the *leaf* (such as cabbage and lettuce)
   - Sometimes we eat the *stems* (such as asparagus and celery)
   - Sometimes we eat the *fruit* (such as blueberries, cherries and apples)
   - Sometimes we eat the *seed* (such as pomegranates and pumpkin seeds)
Tomatoes
Week 2: Tomatoes Grow on a Vine

MATERIALS
- *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine* by Mari Schuh
- Paper and crayons (for 4 drawings of the tomato lifecycle)

LESSON
In Preparation:

Draw a simple drawing of each stage of the tomato lifecycle: 1) Seeds 2) Seedlings 3) Flowers 4) Tomatoes (see page 6 of *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine*).

In Class:

1) Read the book *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine*.

2) Ask the children if they have ever grown tomatoes at home.

3) Explain that as a class you will review the lifecycle of a tomato. A lifecycle is the stages a plant or animal goes through as they grow up. People begin as babies then grow into a child and become an adult - that is our lifecycle.

4) Ask for 4 volunteers to stand in front of the class.

5) Give each volunteer a picture of one of the stages of the tomato lifecycle (out of order).

6) Name each of the stages – seeds, seedlings, flowers and tomatoes.

7) Ask the children to determine which stage goes first and move the children around until the students are in the correct order.

8) That’s right - tomato seeds grow into seedlings that make flowers which grow into the tomatoes we eat.

9) Thank the students for their participation.

10) If possible, do the optional Creative Movement activity “The Lifecycle of a Tomato” as a class.

Students will...
* understand the a tomato plant grows from a tomato seed.
* be able to describe the lifecycle of a tomato.
Week 3: Tasting and Exploring Tomatoes

LESSON
1) Explain to the students that today we will be tasting different kinds or varieties of tomatoes.
2) Show the children the different varieties, noting colors, size and how/where they grew.
3) Ask the children to determine which tomato is the smallest and which is the largest, and arrange in order from smallest to largest.
4) Ask the children to name another fruit or vegetable of the same color, something that is round or oval like a tomato, something bigger than a tomato, something smaller than a tomato, and something the same size as a tomato.
5) Slice one tomato of each variety and place on separate plates.
6) With the students compare what the tomatoes look like on the outside and inside.
7) Next, explain that we will taste the different types of tomatoes but that whenever we eat, we first need to wash our hands.
8) In small groups, have the students wash their hands.
9) As a group, taste one tomato variety at a time. Discuss the similarities and differences: taste (which one is the sweetest?), smell (which one smells the best? What does it smell like?), color, and texture (soft, crunchy, mushy?) of the fruit.
10) Ask the class, what are the small round things inside the tomato? Those are the seeds. Each seed can grow into a new tomato plant. Explain that some seeds are okay to eat like seeds in a tomato and cucumbers but some seeds are not okay to eat, like apple and orange seeds.
11) Refer to Conducting an In-Class Taste Test for ideas on how to engage the class. Have students put a sticker on either the “I Like This” or “I Don’t Like This Yet” columns of the taste test sheet, or have them write or initial their names if they are able to do so.

MATERIALS
☐ Food Experience ingredients

LEARNING STANDARDS
Head Start Learning Domains
- Language Development (Receptive, Expressive)
- Literacy Knowledge and Skills (Early Writing)
- Approaches to Learning (Initiative Curiosity, Cooperation)
- Social & Emotional Development (Social Relationships)
- Mathematics Knowledge and Skills (Measurement & Comparison, Geometry & Spatial Sense, Number Concepts & Quantities)
- Science Knowledge and Skills (Scientific Skills & Method, Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural & Physical World)
- Physical Development and Health (Health Knowledge & Practice)
- Logic and Reasoning (Reasoning & Problem Solving)
- English Language Development (Expressive & Receptive English Language Skills, Engagement in English Literacy Activities)

DRDP-2015
- Approaches to Learning-Self Regulation; ATL-REG1
- Social and Emotional Development; SED1, SED3, SED4
- Language and Literacy Development; LLD1, LLD2, LLD3
- Cognition-Math & Science; COG2, COG4, COG9, COG10
- Physical Development-Health
- PD-HLTH10
- History-Social Science; HSS5

Students will...
* compare the different varieties of tomatoes to determine size order.
* be able to describe the colors and shapes of the different varieties of tomatoes.
* taste different varieties of tomatoes.
Food Experience: Tasting Tomatoes

Serves 10 · Prep time: 10 minutes · Cook time: None

Ingredients:

- 4 Roma Tomatoes
- 4 Yellow Tomatoes (if available)
- 2 1/2 cups of Hummus
- 4 Tomatoes on the vine
- 20 Cherry or Grape Tomatoes*

*Other tomatoes varieties can also be used, try to offer at least 3 different varieties. There are hundreds of tomato varieties–get creative!

Directions:

1) Gently wash the tomatoes with warm water.
2) Slice each tomato into approximately 5 slices, cut cherry/grape tomatoes in half.
3) Serve each student 2 slice of each tomato, 2 grape or cherry tomato and 1/4 cup of hummus.
4) Have children try one of each tomato, then eat the rest with hummus.
5) Enjoy!

Makes about 10 taste tests

Recipe developed by Network for a Healthy California

Materials Needed:
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Plates
- Spoon

Chef's Notes:
- Small tomatoes, such as cherry or grape tomatoes, can be a choking hazard. Cut tomatoes in half to prevent choking.

Nutrition Facts

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<th>Servings per Recipe 10</th>
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<td>Calcium 4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iron 6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

A ✓ indicates that this food group qualifies for CACFP crediting. If two categories are checked off, then the recipe qualifies for CACFP reimbursement. The nutrition facts are provided to you for CACFP creditable recipes.
| "I LIKE THIS" | "I DON’T LIKE THIS YET" |
| "ME GUSTA" | "NO ME GUSTA TODAVÍA" |
Week 4: Tomatoes Discovery Lab

Materials
- A variety of tomatoes
- A knife and cutting board
- Scientific tools such as: measuring tapes/rulers, a scale, magnifying glasses, tweezers

Learning Standards
Head Start Learning Domains
- Language Development (Expressive Language)
- Literacy Knowledge and Skills (Book Appreciation, Print Concepts & Convention, Early Writing)
- Approaches to Learning (Initiative & Curiosity, Cooperation)
- Social & Emotional Development (Social Relationships)
- Mathematics Knowledge and Skills (Number Relationships & Operations, Geometry & Spatial Sense, Patterns, Measurement & Comparison)
- Science Knowledge and Skills (Scientific Skills & Method, Conceptual Understanding of the Natural & Physical World)
- Physical Development and Health (Health Knowledge & Practice)
- Logic and Reasoning (Reasoning & Problem Solving, Symbolic representation)
- English Language Development (Expressive & Receptive English Language Skills, Engagement in English Literacy Activities)

DRDP-2015
- Approaches to Learning Self Regulation; ATL-REG1, ATL-REG4
- Social and Emotional Development; SED3, SED4
- Language and Literacy Development; LLD1, LLD2, LLD3, LLD4, LLD10
- Cognition-Math & Science; COG2, COG5, COG10, COG11
- Physical Development-Health; PD-HLTH10
- History-Social Science; HSS5

Lesson
In Preparation:
Set a table (or tables) with various tomatoes, scientific tools, paper and crayons.

In Class:
1) Explain to the class that today we will be scientists exploring tomatoes:
   - We will use our senses of sight, sounds, touch and smell to observe how the tomatoes are the same and different. We will also compare the outside to the inside of tomatoes.
   - We will use scientific tools to measure and weigh which tomatoes are larger, smaller, lighter or heavier.
   - You will record your observations on your paper with pictures or words.
   - We will create a book of our “Tomato Observations” and place it in our library.

2) In small groups allow the students to explore the tomatoes on their own. You can guide them to use the scientific tools appropriately.

3) Ask guiding questions that will encourage them to further explore- which one is the largest? Do they have the same shape? Color? How do they feel?

4) Encourage students to draw their observations. Teachers can write down the students’ observations on each of their papers.

5) Ask students to hypothesize (guess) what will be inside the tomato.

6) Next, cut open a tomato. Ask students to compare the inside from the outside – how is the inside different from the outside? Does it feel the same? Smell the same? Look the same?

7) Encourage students to separate the seeds from the tomatoes and examine them. You can place some on a paper plate in the window to dry and have the students examine them later that week.

8) Continue to remind students to draw their tomato observations, and when students are done, staple the pages together to create a book titled “Tomato Observations” and place in your library.
Extending the Learning Experience
Optional Supplemental Lessons

WEEK 1
DRDP 2015
COG9, COG10, PD-HLTH4

My Favorite Fruits and Vegetables
After discussing the different parts of the plants we eat, ask the students to draw their favorite fruit and vegetables. This can be done individually on their own sheets of paper or collectively on large paper to make a class collage. As they draw/color, help them identify which part of the plant they are drawing. Write down any observations the students make next to their drawing. Display their drawings in the classroom.

WEEK 2
DRDP 2015
PD-HLTH1, PD-HLTH2

Creative Movement: Lifecycle of a Tomato
(If possible have at least one adult model the movement)
Ask the students to crouch down into a ball to become tiny “seeds.” Pretend to spray them with water.
Have them begin to sprout by slowly stretching their legs.
Tell them to reach their face to the sun to grow strong.
Make their legs and feet firm to make strong roots.
Slowly stretch their arms up with their fists closed.
Slowly open their “flowers” (hands) to create fruits.
The fruit drops its seed.
They plop back down and start the process over.
You can also incorporate a slide whistle as they “grow

WEEK 3
DRDP 2015
COG2, COG3, COG4, HSS5

After the Tomato Taste Test, consider creating a Class Tasting Chart:
Draw a tasting chart on a large paper or board.
On bottom of the chart draw and write the name of the tomato tasted (i.e. Roma, Cherry, Yellow, on the Vine, etc).
On the left side of the chart #1-20 or as many students that are in the class; be sure to include yourself and other teachers in the classroom.
Ask the students which tomato was their favorite and record it in the chart.
Discuss the results: “More students like Roma than Cherry.”
Display the chart for the children and parents to see.

Seed Card Matching Game:
Let the tomato seeds from the taste test or science discovery lab dry out a little.
Save and dry seeds from another vegetable or fruit such as a cucumber, bell pepper or apple.
Glue the seeds onto a picture card of a tomato and any another vegetable or fruit you have seeds for (a simple drawing is fine).
Cover the picture and seeds with clear contact paper or tape to make a sturdy picture card.
Make smaller cards that have the seeds without the pictures.
See if the children can match the seed cards to the picture/seed cards.
Do taste tests of other fruits and vegetables over the next few months and save their seeds to make more cards- apples, oranges, peas, etc.
Leave the cards in the science area for children to look at and talk about.
Provide magnifying glasses so children can see the seeds more clearly.

Adapted from Nutritional Activities for Preschoolers
Food Experience: Pizza Melt Sandwich

Serves 20 • Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: 5-8 minutes

Ingredients
- 10 mini 100% whole wheat 3” bagels, sliced in half
- 4 Large Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
- Italian seasoning (dry thyme, oregano, basil, or tsp of each)
- 2 ½ cups (40 Tbsp) of pizza sauce
- 1 ¼ cup (10 oz.) of low fat Mozzarella cheese, grated

Directions:
1) Pre-heat oven/toaster oven to 400 degrees.
2) Place mini bagel halves on a baking sheet.
3) Spread 2 Tbsp of pizza sauce on top of each bagel half.
4) Lightly sprinkle Italian Seasoning over the pizza sauce.
5) Place on tomato slice on each bagel half.
6) Sprinkle approximately 1 Tbsp of cheese on top of the tomato slice.
7) Bake for 5-8 minutes, until cheese is melted.
8) Serve warm and taste!

Nutrition Facts

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<td>4 %</td>
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MATERIALS NEEDED
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Baking sheet
- Plates
- Mini oven

CHEF’S NOTES
- Allow pizzas to cool for a few minutes after taking them out the oven before serving.

Recipe adapted from 2006 California Tomato Commission

Snack

Fruit

Vegetable

Grain/Alternative

1/2 serving

Meat/Alternative

0.5 oz

Milk

A ✅ indicates that this food group qualifies for CACFP crediting. If two categories are checked off, then the recipe qualifies for CACFP reimbursement. The nutrition facts are provided to you for CACFP creditable recipes.
Food Experience: Traditional Pico de Gallo

Serves 12 (1/2 cup each) · Prep time: 15 minutes · Cook time: None

Ingredients:
- 6 medium Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 fresh jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped (optional)
- 4 tablespoons lime juice (approximately 4 limes)
- 2/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 (bag 6 oz) reduced-fat tortilla chips (or celery sticks)

Directions:
1) Combine all of the ingredients except for the tortilla chips or celery sticks in a medium bowl.
2) Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.
3) Serve on plates with the tortilla chips or celery sticks.
4) Enjoy!

Recipe adapted from Healthy Latino Recipes Cookbook - Network for a Healthy California

Nutrition Facts

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Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

MATERIALS NEEDED
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Medium bowl
- Plates
- Spoon

CHEF’S NOTES
- Chop onions and garlic finely to reduce exposure to strong taste and orders
- Use purple onions to add color

Snack

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<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
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A ✔️ indicates that this food group qualifies for CACFP crediting. If two categories are checked off, then the recipe qualifies for CACFP reimbursement. The nutrition facts are provided to you for CACFP creditable recipes.

Urban & Environmental Policy Institute
Occidental College
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(323) 259-2991

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Healthy Serving Ideas
- Use raw tomatoes to make salsas or as a base for soups and sauces.
- Toss sliced red, yellow, and green tomatoes with your family's favorite lowfat dressing for a quick salad.
- Make a new tomato recipe. Ask your child to help choose the recipe, shop for ingredients, and prepare it.
- Buy low-sodium canned tomatoes, tomato paste, and tomato sauce when fresh tomatoes are unavailable.

**Nutrition Facts**
Serving Size: ½ cup tomatoes, sliced (90g)

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**HUEVOS RANCHEROS WITH FRESH SALSA**

Makes 4 servings. 1 tortilla per serving. Cook time: 30 minutes

**Ingredients:**
4 (6-inch) corn tortillas
½ tablespoon vegetable oil
nonstick cooking spray
1½ cups egg substitute
2 tablespoons shredded cheese
2 cups fresh salsa
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. Lightly brush tortillas with oil on both sides. Place on a baking sheet. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes or until tortillas are crisp on the edges. Remove from oven and set aside.
3. Spray a large skillet with nonstick cooking spray.
4. Cook egg substitute in skillet over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes until eggs are cooked.
5. Place equal amounts of egg on each tortilla. Top each with ½ tablespoon cheese.
6. Place under the broiler for about 2 minutes until cheese is melted. Spoon ½ cup fresh salsa over each tortilla and top with ground black pepper. Serve warm.

Nutrition information per serving:
Calories 146, Carbohydrate 16 g, Dietary Fiber 3 g, Protein 13 g, Total Fat 4 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 3 mg, Sodium 255 mg

Adapted from: *Everyday Healthy Meals, Network for a Healthy California, 2007.*

**How Much Do I Need?**
- A ½ cup of sliced tomatoes is about one small tomato.
- A ½ cup of sliced tomatoes is a good source of vitamin C and vitamin A.
- Tomatoes are a great source of lycopene. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that may help lower the risk of some forms of cancer, promotes heart health, and helps keep the immune system healthy.

The amount of fruits and vegetables you need every day depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. Make meal plans to help your family get the right amount of fruits and vegetables every day.

**Recommended Daily Amount of Fruits and Vegetables**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kids, Ages 5-12</th>
<th>Teens and Adults, Ages 13 and up</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>2½ - 5 cups per day</td>
<td>4½ - 6½ cups per day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>2½ - 5 cups per day</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to learn more.

**Produce Tips**
- Look for tomatoes that are firm and give slightly to gentle pressure.
- Store ripened tomatoes at room temperature, out of direct sunlight. Use within a few days.
- Place unripened tomatoes in a brown paper bag until ripe.
- Before serving, wash tomatoes in cold water and remove any stems or leaves.

For more ideas, visit: [www.cawalktoschool.com](http://www.cawalktoschool.com)
Ideas Saludables de Preparación

- Use tomates crusados para hacer salsa o como base para salsas.
- Prepare una receta nueva con tomates. Pídale a su hijo/a que le ayude a elegir la receta, a comprar los ingredientes y a prepararla.
- Compre tomates enlatados, puré de tomate y salsa de tomate bajos en sodio cuando no haya tomates frescos.

**Información Nutricional**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Porción: ½ taza de tomate, rebanado (90g)</th>
<th>Calorías 16</th>
<th>Calorías de Grasa 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Valor Diario</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasas 0g</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasa Saturada 0g</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasa Trans 0g</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colesterol 0mg</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodio 4mg</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohidratos 4g</td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibra Dietética 1g</td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azúcares 2g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proteínas 1g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**¿Cuánto Necesito?**

- Una ½ taza de tomates rebanados equivale aproximadamente a un tomate pequeño.
- Una ½ taza de tomates rebanados es una fuente buena de vitamina C y vitamina A.
- Los tomates son una fuente muy buena de licopeno. El licopeno es un poderoso antioxidante que puede ayudar a disminuir el riesgo de contraer algunos tipos de cáncer.

La cantidad de frutas y verduras que necesita diariamente depende de su edad, sexo y nivel de actividad física. Planeee las comidas de modo que ayuden a su familia a obtener la cantidad necesaria de frutas y verduras todos los días.

**HUEVOS RANCHEROS CON PICO DE GALLO**

**Rinde 4 porciones. 1 tortilla por porción.**

**Tiempo de preparación:** 30 minutos

**Ingredientes:**
- 4 tortillas de maíz (de 6 pulgadas)
- ½ cucharadita de aceite vegetal en aerosol para cocinar
- 1 ½ tazas de substituto de huevo
- 2 cucharadas de queso rallado
- 2 tazas de Pico de Gallo
- ⅛ cucharadita de pimienta molida

1. Caliente el horno a 450°F.
2. Unte ligeramente con aceite las tortillas por ambos lados y póngalas en una charola para horno. Hornee de 5 a 10 minutos, hasta que las orillas de las tortillas estén crujientes. Retírelas y déjelas a un lado.
3. Rocíe un sartén grande con aceite en aerosol para cocinar.
4. Cocine el substituto de huevo a fuego medio de 2 a 3 minutos hasta que el huevo esté bien cocido.
5. Ponga cantidades iguales de huevo en cada tortilla y espolvoree con ½ cucharada de queso.
6. Cocine en la parrilla del horno en “Broil” unos 2 minutos, hasta que el queso se derrita. Con una cuchara, ponga ½ taza de Pico de Gallo sobre cada tortilla y espolvoreéla con pimienta molida. Sirva caliente.

**Información Nutricional por porción:**
- Calorías 146
- Carbohidratos 16 g
- Fibra Dietética 3 g
- Proteínas 13 g
- Grasa Total 4 g
- Colesterol 0 mg
- Sodio 255 mg


**Consejos Saludables**

- Busque tomates que estén firmes y cedan con una ligera presión.
- Guarde los tomates maduros a temperatura ambiente, lejos de la luz directa del sol. Úselos a los pocos días.

†Sitio web sólo disponible en inglés.
Health and Learning Success Go Hand-In-Hand
The classroom is an ideal place to teach students about the importance of eating healthy and being physically active. Studies show a relationship between good nutrition and improved behavioral performance, particularly among those with poor nutritional status. Harvest of the Month connects with core curricula and links the classroom, cafeteria, home, and community.

Exploring California Tomatoes: Taste Testing
What You Will Need:
- Variety of tomatoes*
- One tomato of each variety per every four students
- Cutting board and knife for each student group
- Dry erase board and markers
*See Botanical Facts on page 2 for varieties. Harvest from your school garden.

Activity:
- Label five columns on board: smell, sound, look, texture, taste.
- Label rows according to tomato varieties.
- Guide students to observe, smell, feel, and taste tomatoes.
- Note students’ observations on board.
- Discuss similarities and differences among varieties.
- Graph each student’s favorite variety on board to determine overall class favorite.

Follow-up Activity:
Complete the School Garden activity on page 4.
For more ideas, visit:
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/

Cooking in Class:
Pico de Gallo
Makes 36 tastes at ¼ cup each

Ingredients:
- 3 pounds tomatoes, chopped
- 4½ cups chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 9 jalapeño peppers, seeds removed and chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 tablespoons lime juice
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- Small paper cups
- Baked tortilla chips

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Serve in small cups with baked tortilla chips.

Nutrition information per serving*:
- Calories 17
- Carbohydrate 4 g
- Dietary Fiber 1 g
- Sugars 2 g
- Protein 1 g

*Information for Pico de Gallo only; does not include tortilla chips.

Reasons to Eat Tomatoes
A ½ cup of sliced tomato is:
- A good source of vitamin C and vitamin A.
- A source of vitamin K and potassium.
- Rich in lycopene*, which is a type of phytonutrient called a carotenoid.
*Learn more about lycopene on page 2.

Champion Sources of Lycopene*:
- Pink grapefruit
- Salsa
- Tomatoes
- Tomato products
- Watermelon
*Champion foods are a great source of lycopene.

For more ideas, visit:
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/tomato.html
What is Lycopene?
- Lycopene is an antioxidant pigment found in tomatoes, watermelon, and pink grapefruit that gives foods their reddish color.
- Lycopene is a carotenoid, which is an antioxidant that may decrease the risk of certain cancers and heart disease and also help to keep the immune system healthy.
- Lycopene cannot be produced in the body so it can only be obtained by eating lycopene-rich foods.
- Cooked tomato products, sauces, and juices contain higher amounts of lycopene than raw tomatoes due to greater concentration (i.e., it takes many cups of raw tomatoes to make one cup of tomato sauce, and thus the lycopene concentration is greater).

For more information, visit: www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=3542&terms=lycopene

How Much Do I Need?
A ½ cup of sliced tomatoes is about one small tomato. This is about the same as one cupped handful. The amount of fruits and vegetables each person needs depends on age, gender, and physical activity level. Download a MyPyramid food tracking worksheet* from USDA’s Team Nutrition. Have students write down their daily goals and track their food choices. At the end of each week, review worksheets as a class and have students assess if they met their goals and where they need improvement.


Recommended Daily Amount of Fruits and Vegetables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Kids, Ages 5-12</th>
<th>Teens and Adults, Ages 13 and up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2½ - 5 cups per day</td>
<td>4½ - 6½ cups per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2½ - 5 cups per day</td>
<td>3½ - 5 cups per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day.
Visit www.choosemyplate.gov to learn more.

Just the Facts
- There are more than 4,000 varieties of tomatoes ranging in size, shape, and color.
- Botanically, the tomato is a fruit. However, in 1893, the U.S. Supreme Court declared it a vegetable.*
- According to USDA, Americans eat more than 22 pounds of tomatoes each year, more than half of this amount in the form of ketchup and/or tomato sauce.
- Tomatoes are grown in every state in the United States except Alaska.

*See A Slice of Tomato History on page 3 for more information.
Source: www.cfaitc.org

Botanical Facts
Pronunciation: te-mâ’tô
Spanish name: tomate
Family: Solanaceae
Genus: Solanum
Species: S. lycopersicum

The tomato is a berry of the nightshade family, which includes potatoes, eggplants, and peppers. The word “tomato” is derived from the Nahuatl (Aztec language) word, tomatl, meaning “something round and plump.” Over the years, the tomato has endured many names including “love apple,” “golden apple,” “apple of paradise,” and even “devil apple” by those who believed the tomato to be poisonous.

Varieties are commonly divided into these categories, based mostly on shape, use, and size (small to large):
- Cherry: sweet tomatoes, usually eaten whole in salads
- Plum: pear-shaped, more meaty, ideal for tomato products, also called Italian or Roma
- Slicing: round or globe-shaped, used mainly for commerce and processed products
- Beefsteak: round, juicy, used mainly for sandwiches

Other varieties include heirlooms, green, orange, and yellow tomatoes. Yellow and orange tomatoes tend to be sweeter than red and green varieties; only red tomatoes, which contain a red pigment, contain lycopene.

For more information, visit: www.plants.usda.gov

Student Sleuths
1. Lycopene is an antioxidant that was only recently discovered. Why is it important to our diet? Can the body make its own lycopene?
2. List three nutrients found in tomatoes. Name some of the health benefits of these nutrients. Describe the impact of processing, if any, on each nutrient.
3. How do botanists define fruits? Vegetables? Explain why the tomato is sometimes called a vegetable instead of a fruit.
4. Tomatoes are eaten by people throughout the world. Identify at least five different cultures and research how tomatoes are used in their traditional meals.
5. California grows what percentage of the nation’s tomatoes for processing? List five processed tomato products available in most grocery stores.
6. Using a California map, color in the top three tomato-producing counties. In what months does peak harvesting take place in these counties?
7. How are processing tomatoes harvested differently than fresh market tomatoes? Why do processing tomatoes have thicker skins?

For more information, visit:
www.californiatomatoes.org
www.cfaitc.org/factsheets/pdf/ProcessingTomato.pdf

Recommended Daily Amount of Fruits and Vegetables*

- 2½ - 5 cups per day
- 3½ - 5 cups per day

*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day.
Visit www.choosemyplate.gov to learn more.
**How Do Tomatoes Grow?**

The tomato is a warm-weather perennial plant, sensitive to frost at any stage of growth. In California, fresh-market tomatoes are grown using one of two methods: bush or pole. In the Central Valley, 100 percent of all tomatoes are grown using bushes, while most Southern California coastal counties practice the pole method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bush-Harvesting</th>
<th>Pole-Harvesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Same as bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80 F (High: 100 F; Chilling: 50 F)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>Same as bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay and loam (produce most plentiful crops); in wet areas, sandy soils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vines</td>
<td>“Indeterminate,” long, climbing; supported by stakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Determinate,” short; bushes without support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting</td>
<td>In beds 5'-6' long, single row, 18” apart; stakes posted every 2'-3'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds planted on raised beds, single row, 18” apart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Same as bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop from flower ovaries (like berries); either bilocular or multilocular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting</td>
<td>Hand-harvested at mature green fruit stage about 80 to 110 days after planting; picked total 1-2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand-harvested as vine-ripe for 70 to 120 days or longer; picked 1-3 times per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common varieties</td>
<td>Bingo, Merced, Tango, Celebrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shady Lady, Sunbrite, Roma, QualiT 21, Merced, Sonnet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, visit: [http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8017.pdf](http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8017.pdf)

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**Cafeteria Connections**

- Ask school nutrition staff to offer different salsas when serving tacos, taco salad, or burritos; also suggest including salsa in the baked potato and garden bar.
- Conduct a survey during the lunch hour asking students about their favorite ways to eat tomatoes.
- Select a team of *Student Advocates* (page 4) to help identify local tomato growers or distributors who can sell tomatoes to the school/district. Share list with school nutrition staff.


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**A Slice of Tomato History**

- The first tomatoes can be traced back to the Andes in Peru, where they grew wild as cherry-sized berries. As early as 700 A.D., the Incas and Aztecs began cultivating tomato plants.
- Mexico’s Aztecs and Mayans gave the tomato its name, first “xitomatle,” then “tomatle” or “tomati.”
- In the mid-1500s, Spanish conquistadors carried tomato seeds back to Europe, where they were embraced in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.
- In 17th and 18th century England, tomatoes were believed to be poisonous. (Eating the stems and leaves may cause illness and should be avoided.)
- Thomas Jefferson was one of the first Americans to grow tomatoes at his Virginia home as early as 1781. By 1812, tomatoes were gaining in popularity among Louisiana Creoles who used them in jambalayas and gumbos and Maine cooks who added them to seafood dishes.
- In the 1893 U.S. Supreme Court case of “Nix v. Hedden,” the tomato was declared a vegetable, along with cucumbers, squashes, beans, and peas. This came about as a result of tariff laws in 1887, which imposed a duty on vegetables but not fruits.
- George Washington Carver believed tomatoes had “medicinal virtues.” After World War I, he issued “115 Ways to Prepare It [Tomatoes] For the Table” thus marking the introduction of the tomato into popular culture.

[http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu)

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Adapted from: *Hot as a Pepper, Cool as a Cucumber*, Meredith Sayles Hughes, 1999. To download reproducible botanical images, visit the Educators’ Corner at [www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com).
Physical Activity Corner

To achieve optimal learning in the classroom, studies show that students need to activate their minds and bodies. Here is a quick (5-10 minute) activity that you can do with your students to help energize their bodies.

Have students pretend they are on a trip to the farm and move their bodies to each prompt (spend 30 seconds to one minute on each activity).

1. Climb the apple tree.
2. Walk through the tall corn fields.
3. Squat down and pick up the pumpkins and load them in the truck.
4. Pull carrots from the ground.
5. Reach for oranges on the tree.
6. Bend down and pick up tomatoes to put in your basket.
7. Push the wheelbarrow of hay.
8. Run to open the gate for the cows.
9. Swim like a fish in the pond.
10. Dig holes to plant potatoes.

For more information, visit:
www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pe/cf/

Home Grown Facts

- California is the nation’s tomato capital. Ninety-five percent of processing tomatoes and about 75 percent of all tomatoes are grown in California.
- Tomatoes are grown throughout the state, but about 90 percent of California grown tomatoes are harvested in nine counties.
- The largest fresh-market tomato producing counties are: Fresno, Merced, San Joaquin, San Diego, Kern, Stanislaus, Kings, Tulare, and Sacramento.

For more information, visit:
www.cfaitc.org
www.cdfa.ca.gov

School Garden: Tomatoes Galore

If your school has a garden, here is an activity you may want to implement. Look for donations to cover the cost of seeds, tools, irrigation systems, electric pumps, and any salary incurred by garden educators or others.

- Select a colorful variety of tomatoes from the school garden, farmers’ market, or supermarket.*
- Download the botanical image (page 3) and CFAITC’s Tomato Life Cycle image.** Discuss the growing process for tomato plants. Have students identify parts of the plant and tomato.
- Have students look up the nutrition information for each variety. (Hint: search www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/)
- Compare the different nutrients in each variety. Discuss why different varieties (and different colored tomatoes) have different nutrients.

* Suggested varieties: roma, heirloom, cherry tomatoes, better boy tomatoes, beefsteak tomatoes, etc.

Student Champions

- Visit local grocery stores. Find out if the store buys/sells fresh tomatoes that are grown by local farmers (or in California), out-of-state, or abroad?
- If the store does not purchase tomatoes from local growers, find out why not.
- Propose options for stores to consider purchasing tomatoes from local or regional growers.
- Ask stores for tomato plant donations for school garden or classroom.

For more information, visit:

Adventurous Activities

Many factors affect agricultural production. Techniques like selective breeding, genetic engineering, and more efficient farming practices have allowed growers to produce crops that are more plentiful, safer for the environment, more nutritious, and better tasting. Research how tomato production has evolved with advancing technology.