

# HARVEST of the MONTH TOMATOES



We are featuring fresh, healthy, locally grown tomatoes in school lunches this month. Can you taste the difference?

Eating many different colorful fruits and vegetables can help keep your family healthy. Fresh tomatoes are a wonderful treat this time of year! Tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C (good for your immune system) and vitamin A (good for your eyes!).

## Healthy Serving Ideas

- Make a fresh salsa with chopped tomatoes, diced red onion, a seeded chopped jalapeño, and a splash of lime juice. Add salt to taste and eat with whole grain tortilla chips or as a topping on your favorite tacos.
- Slice tomatoes in half, scoop out seeds, and stuff with cooked brown rice, corn, minced garlic, and salt & pepper. Sprinkle with a cheese of your choice and broil for 3-5 minutes until cheese is melted.

## Where to Find Local Tomatoes

MassGrown Map (MDAR)  
<https://massnrc.org/farmlocator>

## Fun Facts

Tomatoes come from Peru, where their Aztec name meant “plump thing with a navel (belly-button!).”

In the U.S. we eat about 20# of tomatoes per year.

In Massachusetts, over 500 farms produce 6.5 million pounds of tomatoes each year.

## At-Home Activity

Tomato Taste Test & Seed Counting Activity

1. Gather 3-4 different types of tomatoes (small, medium, large).
2. Guess how many seeds are in each tomato.
3. Cut the tomatoes, remove seeds & count.
4. Compare guesses to the actual seed count.
5. Taste each type of tomato and talk about flavor, color, and size differences. What was your favorite?

*Adapted from Green Mountain Farm to School*

*Harvest of the Month promotes a different Massachusetts-grown crop from local farms each month in school cafeterias across the state. To learn more about Harvest of the Month, visit [www.massfarmtoschool.org/hotm](http://www.massfarmtoschool.org/hotm)*

## Harvest of the Month Book Club

Elementary: Strega Nona & Her Tomatoes by Tomie dePaola

Middle: Seedfolks by Paul Fleishman

High: The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience, and Farming by Natasha Bowen



*Thank you to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources for helping make Harvest of the Month possible.*

## Tomato Purchasing Pointers

Look for tomatoes that are firm and smooth.

Store tomatoes at room temperature, out of direct sunlight.

Buy tomatoes when they are in season. They cost less and taste best!

Look for our October Pear newsletter next month!

