

FOOD & FLAVOUR



SUMMER FLAVOURS

FRESH LOCAL TOMATOES

by Barb Kemp

Fresh local summer produce is available now in your local farmer markets. Expect to find a variety of wonderful colourful foods with flavours that instantly explode in your mouth.

But if you procrastinate too long, all this greatness will be gone and you'll be left standing in the rain, wondering where all the local farmers went.

While you are poking around the different vendors, be sure to purchase some local tomatoes. There are many varieties to choose from and all are worth sampling. Nothing beats eating a sweet, freshly-picked tomato right off the vine.

Once picked, store these red gems on the counter and not in the refrigerator. Cold drains their taste and creates a mealy texture. When choosing tomatoes pick those with bright red skin, free of blemishes and firm to touch.

Roma tomatoes, which are also called plum tomatoes, are excellent for cooking because they have fewer seeds. However, if you wish to remove the seeds from a tomato, simply cut it in half and squeeze. Then take a spoon and scoop away any remaining stubborn seeds. Need an excuse to go to the market? Here are two summer tomato recipes to try.

FRESH TOMATO AND BASIL BRUSCHETTA

Serves 4

4 large ripe tomatoes seeded, cored and chopped into ½ inch dice
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 3 tablespoons olive oil
 ¼ cup red onion chopped fine
 1/3 cup fresh basil leaves chopped
 salt and pepper to taste
 ¼ cup olive oil
 1 baguette
 2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
 Preheat broiler. Cut baguette crossways into 1 inch pieces. Place on a cookie sheet and toast under broiler about 4 inches from element until golden brown. Turn and toast the other side. Brush olive oil on both sides and rub each side with garlic. Combine the tomato, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, chopped red onion and fresh basil leaves together. Season with salt and pepper. Divide the mixture evenly on the toast and serve.

PASTA WITH ROASTED TOMATOES

Serves 4

1 ½ pounds Roma tomatoes
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
 1 clove garlic
 Fresh Parmesan cheese
 Salt and pepper
 500 g of pasta

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Slice tomatoes in half. Place cut side up on a cookie sheet. Brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast in oven 30 minutes.

Cook pasta in a pot of boiling salted water. While pasta is cooking combine the roasted tomatoes, 2 tablespoons olive oil, basil and garlic. Drain the pasta. Add tomatoes mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Serve and pass the Parmesan cheese.

Barb Kemp is a writer and facilitator. Find her food and cooking info for the everyday cook at www.recipestotherescue.ca.



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