

Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 7

Prevent Lifestyle Disease with Lycopene's 'Red Power'

Tomatoes are low in calories and pack a lot of beneficial nutrients. In particular, lycopene, which gives them their red color, is also gaining attention for combating lifestyle diseases due to its antioxidant effects. Tomatoes are one of the healthiest foods you can eat.

By Makiko Hei

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Red tomatoes contain plenty of nutrients

Tomatoes contain vitamin C, which promotes beautiful skin and prevents colds, vitamin E, which inhibits aging, potassium, which helps reduce sodium levels, and dietary fiber, which improves intestinal health, among other well-balanced nutrients. Among them, lycopene, which is a kind of carotenoid, is drawing special attention. It has been found that with β -carotene, lycopene helps prevent lifestyle diseases such as aging, arterial sclerosis, and cancer, so interest in lycopene is rising. The antioxidant effects of lycopene are powerful, reportedly twice that of β -carotene and 100 times that of vitamin E.

Lycopene is resistant to heat, can be absorbed at a rate of two to three times higher by cooking tomatoes instead of eating them fresh. In addition, because lycopene is oil-soluble, you can effectively absorb lycopene by cooking tomatoes with olive oil. Or you can just add olive oil to fresh tomatoes.

Lots of flavor component 'glutamate', too

Tomato gives dishes more depth with a combination of sweetness and tartness. In fact, it has lots of a flavor component called glutamate. Glutamate becomes even stronger when combined with other umami ingredients such as inosinic acids. Thanks to this synergetic effect, tomatoes are used in cuisines all over the world.

How to choose a tomato

Choose round, heavy ones. Many clear ribs radially curving toward the stem from the "bottom" of the tomato indicate a high sugar content.

How to store tomatoes

Always remove the stems when storing tomatoes, because they contain bacteria and other contaminants that speed up the decay process. Tomatoes can be frozen for storage, too. Freezing concentrates and increases the flavor components, making frozen tomatoes great for stewing and sauces.

Sake-Steamed Sea Bream with Tomato

~A healthy dish that combines tomato and seafood. Combining flavorful ingredients makes it even more delicious~

Cooking time: 45 minutes

* Excluding time to clean sand out of clams

[Ingredients] (2 servings)

2 slices of sea bream (white-fleshed fish)

1/2 teaspoon salt

150g clams (in shell)

450g tomatoes (2~3 tomatoes)

1/4 onion

Chopped green onion as needed

1 tablespoon olive oil

100ml sake for cooking

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1/2 teaspoon Japanese citrus chili paste (or 1 teaspoon ginger)

[Preparation]

Clean sand out of the clams and rinse them well.

* Pour salt water into a tray, enough to cover the clams, and leave it in the refrigerator for 2~3 hours. Salt concentration is about 1/2 teaspoon per 100ml water.



[How to cook]

1. Sprinkle salt on both sides of the sea bream slices, leave them for about 10 minutes, and wipe off the water with paper towel. Remove the stems of the tomatoes and roughly chop them into 1~2cm cubes. Mince onions.
2. Put the olive oil in the frying pan, add the minced onions and cook over medium heat until the onions become transparent, and then add tomatoes. Turn the heat to high and cook until the tomatoes break up, then cover and boil on medium heat for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally with a rubber spatula until the sauce thickens.
3. Add sake and allow the alcohol to evaporate, and then add soy sauce and Japanese citrus chili paste (or ginger) until dissolved, line up sea bream slices and clams in the pan, cover, and braise on medium heat for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the lid when clamshells open, and finish the sauce by shaking the frying pan while stirring it. And, add additional salt to taste, if needed. Dish up the sea bream slices, clams and the tomato sauce, and top with chopped green onions.



Tips

This dish works equally well with any type of white fish.

Tomato and Burrata Salad with Sesame Seeds

Easy-to-prepare salad, just chop the ingredients and put them together! Add a Japanese touch with perilla (green shiso) and sesame.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

[Ingredients] (2 servings)

1 or 2 tomatoes
(depending on size)
1 burrata
5 perilla leaves
Ground sesame seeds (white)
Olive oil as needed
Salt as needed



2-a



[How to cook]

1. Remove the stem of the tomato, cut it into 1cm-wide thick round slices, put them on a plate, cover the entire plate with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Cut perilla leaves in half lengthwise.
2. Put burrata in the center of (1) above, put perilla between the tomato slices, and top with sesame. At the table, break up the burrata, add olive oil and salt, and plenty of sesame.

2-b



Tips

Burrata is one of the cheeses derived from mozzarella. It looks like mozzarella cheese, but the dough is stuffed with cream and broken mozzarella, and when you insert the knife, the cream overflows. Creamy burrata is recommended if available, but you can substitute it with mozzarella cheese.



Profile

Makiko Hei

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto "Let's make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes!"

HP: <https://vege3.jp/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/makichanshokudo/>

* The school teaches a careful approach to preparing of vegetables in ways to create glamorous vegetable dishes, with the motto "Love vegetables, make delicious daily meals."

