

NUTRITION EDUCATION

TOMATOES

Tomatoes are packed with vitamins to keep your body healthy, including vitamins A, C and K as well as potassium, niacin and folic acid. Tomatoes are also a good source of fiber and are rich in lycopene which is thought to help prevent certain cancers, promote heart health and protect the eyes.

Tomatoes are actually a fruit (a berry to be exact), but in 1893, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that they are a vegetable. This allowed tomatoes to be taxed because at the time, imported vegetables were taxed, but not imported fruit.

Choose tomatoes that have rich colors. Deep reds are a great choice, but so are vibrant oranges/tangerines, brilliant yellows, and rich purples. Tomatoes of all colors provide outstanding nutrient benefits. Tomatoes should be well shaped and smooth skinned with no wrinkles, cracks, bruises, or soft spots. Ripe tomatoes will yield to slight pressure and will have a noticeably sweet fragrance. For the best flavor, store tomatoes at room temperature and out of direct exposure to sunlight. They will keep for about a week, depending upon how ripe they are when you harvest them from your garden or purchase them.

The delicious and easy recipe below is from *Early Sprouts* by Karrie Kalich, Dottie Bauer and Deirdre McPartlin. It is a perfect way to get your child involved in cooking to help them learn more good nutrition and food.

English Muffin Pizzas with Homemade Sauce

2 cups cherry tomatoes, washed (about 20 tomatoes)

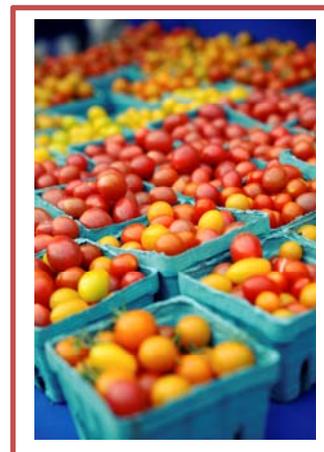
1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon sugar

4 whole wheat English muffins

1½ cups shredded, part-skim mozzarella cheese

Optional Toppings: olives, mushrooms, green peppers, ground beef, etc.



1. Heat oven to 400° F. Have children rinse the cherry tomatoes.
2. Children may halve cherry tomatoes with a small butter knife.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the halved tomatoes to the skillet and sprinkle them with sugar. Sauté for 5 to 6 minutes.
4. Transfer the skillet's contents to a blender or food processor and purée the mixture. Pour the purée into a shallow bowl.
5. Split the English muffins in half and place on ungreased baking sheet.
6. To assemble each pizza, help your child spoon about 2 tablespoons of sauce onto English muffin "crusts." Use the back of the spoon to spread the sauce. Cover the sauce with a handful of cheese and add toppings.
7. Bake the pizzas in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until the cheese is bubbly and just beginning to brown.
8. Allow the pizzas to cool slightly and enjoy your meal together as a family!

