



Home & Garden

By [Megan Swoyer](#) | [Email the author](#) | 12:30am

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Many Recipes for Many Kinds of Tomatoes

Michigan tomato celebration need not last just a few weeks. Check out these recipes from local chefs and home cooks.



It's no mistake that throngs of tomato lovers are pulling over at roadside stands and clamoring over new produce shipments in the grocery aisles. They know just what they're after – those plump juicy orbs recently harvested from Michigan-grown plants.

I've got one word for them: yum!

Your Michigan tomato celebration need not last just a few weeks. Many area chefs and home cooks create tomato sauces and whatnot that they will again treasure in, say January, on a cold winter's night.

[Read Megan Swoyer's full story on how to enjoy tomatoes.](#)

If you are lucky enough to have a bumper crop of tomatoes or have access to some great homegrown or Michigan-farmed fruits, check out the following recipes from local chefs:

Tomato recipes

Hot Tomato "Jam"

(From Chef Jim Bologna, The Townsend Hotel, Birmingham)

Ingredients

- 4 cups ripe tomatoes, peeled, cored, and roughly chopped (for best results, use a variety of tomatoes)
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons finely minced fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil, cut into chiffonade
- salt

Put the first five ingredients into a small sauce pot and cook down until thick about 20 minutes at a low simmer. Carefully pour into a blender and puree, adjust seasoning and fold in basil. This is a great replacement for ketchup at any barbecue.

Cold Tomato-Thyme Soup with Grilled Garlic Croutons

(From Chef Jim Bologna, The Townsend Hotel, Birmingham)

Ingredients

- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups finely chopped onions
- 3/4 cup finely chopped peeled carrots
- 2 ½ teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 pounds ripe tomatoes, halved, seeded, chopped (about 5 cups)
- 3 cups canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme or 1 tablespoon dried
- 1 cup hickory smoke chips, soaked in water 30 minutes, drained
- 3 ¾ -inch-thick slices sourdough bread
- 1 garlic clove, halved
- fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

Heat 4 tablespoons oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add onions, carrots, finely chopped garlic and bay leaf. Cover. Cook until carrots are tender, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add tomatoes. Cover. Cook until tomatoes release juices, about 10 minutes. Uncover; cook until juices evaporate, stirring often, about 20 minutes. Add broth and chopped thyme. Partially cover pot and simmer until mixture is reduced to 6 cups, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes longer.

Cool soup slightly. Discard bay leaf. Puree half of soup in blender. Stir into soup in pot. Season with salt and pepper. Chill uncovered until cold, then cover. (Can be made one day ahead. Keep chilled.)

Prepare barbecue (medium heat). Place smoke chips in 8x6-inch foil packet with open top. Set packet atop coals about five minutes before grilling. Brush one tablespoon oil over both sides of bread slices. Grill bread until lightly browned, about two minutes per side. Rub garlic clove halves over bread. Cut bread into 3/4-inch cubes. If you're not using a grill then you can use a grill pan and omit the wood chips.

Divide cold soup among bowls. Top with croutons. Garnish with thyme.

Tomato "Jam"

(From the chefs at Canape Cart, Ferndale)

Makes about one pint

Ingredients

- 11 1/2 pounds of good ripe tomatoes (Roma) cored and coarsely chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh grated or minced ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 jalapeno or other peppers, stemmed, seeded and minced, or red pepper flakes or cayenne to taste.

Combine all ingredients in a heavy medium saucepan and bring to boil over medium heat while stirring often. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until mixture has consistency of thick jam, about one hour and 15 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning, then cool and refrigerate until ready to use; this will keep at least a week and is great for grilled meats and veggies

Summer Tomato Basil Relish

(From Chef Mark Dixon, Orchard Lake Country Club in Orchard Lake near West Bloomfield)

Ingredients

- 3 cups tomatoes (red, yellow and orange)
- ½ teaspoon fresh garlic, minced
- sea salt
- ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 2 tablespoons white balsamic glaze

Cut tomatoes in quarters. Remove seeds and inner meat only, leaving outer, seedless meat. Discard inner meat and seeds or use in another recipe. Dice outer tomato meat and place into a bowl. Add all other ingredients. Season to taste. Use on fish, chicken or any other favorite food such as salad, etc.

Michigan Heirloom Tomato Soup

(From Chef Brian Henson, Big Rock Chophouse, Birmingham)

Ingredients

- 2 qt. chopped Michigan heirloom tomatoes (Brandywine preferred)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1 whole bunch basil leaf and stem
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- salt and pepper
- tomato juice (if needed)

In a thick bottom stainless pot heat oil, sweat tomato, garlic and onion slowly for 15 minutes. When the tomatoes are completely broken down add basil and coriander continue to cook another five minutes. Blend the soup and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. The soup should be thin enough from the natural juice from the ripe tomato if not adjust the thickness with tomato juice.

Grilled Tomato and Saga Bleu Cheese Sandwich

(From Chef Brian Henson, Big Rock Chophouse, Birmingham)

Ingredients

- 2 slices of thick, buttered Challah bread
- 4 thick slices of Saga bleu cheese (use Arla from Muskegon, MI)
- 3 slices Michigan heirloom tomato

Place both slices of bread buttered side down in a sauté pan, medium heat. Layer the cheese and tomato on the bread and toast slowly until the cheese is melted and the bread is golden brown. Fold each slice together and serve with above soup.

Tomato Salad with Grilled Watermelon

(From Chef Jeremy Grandon, Jeremy Restaurant & Bar, Keego Harbor)

Serves four

Ingredients

- 1 large ripe beefsteak tomato
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil or mint
- ¼ cup crumbled feta
- 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds
- 1 small cucumber, seeded and sliced thinly
- 2 large slices watermelon, ½ inch thick and about 4 inches by six inches in size
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- one recipe honey lime vinaigrette (recipe follows)

Slice the tomato about ½ an inch thick and arrange the slices on four salad plates. Sprinkle the cherry tomatoes, chopped basil, feta, cucumber and sunflower seeds over the tomato slices in a random pattern. Sprinkle the salad with some coarse salt to season.

Mix the brown sugar and canola oil to form a paste. Brush this over the watermelon. Place the melon on a hot grill and cook about 20 to 30 seconds per side or until caramelized and marked by the grill grates. Remove the melon from the grill and cut the slices into smaller pieces. Arrange these pieces over the 4 salads and drizzle each plate with the honey lime vinaigrette.

Honey-Lime Vinaigrette

Ingredients

- ¼ cup white balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup canola, grape seed or olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- juice and zest of one lime

Mix the salt, vinegar, honey and mustard in a small bowl. Do this with a whisk to thoroughly dissolve everything together. Whisk in the oil. Add the lime zest and juice to finish. You can use one or a combination of the different oils. Use this vinaigrette on salads, vegetables or on grilled meat or fish.

Veal Milanese

(From Chef Jeremy Grandon, Jeremy Restaurant & Bar, Keego Harbor)

Ingredients

- 2 large veal rib chops, pounded thinly
- Flour for dusting

- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 tablespoon grated parmesan (fine)
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Tomato salad
- 1 large ripe tomato
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 4 leaves fresh basil
- 1 clove minced garlic
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- garnish
- 2 cups arugula
- A few shavings of parmesan

Begin by creating an egg wash with the milk and eggs. Add the parmesan, Italian seasoning and black pepper to the breadcrumbs along with a pinch of salt. Dredge the veal in the flour then in the egg wash, then into the seasoned bread crumbs, patting hard to coat thoroughly.

For the tomato salad, cut the tomato into wedges and place into a bowl along with the cherry tomatoes. Roughly chop the basil and add. Add the garlic and onion. Season with salt. Sprinkle in the vinegar and oil, stir and allow to macerate for half an hour.

Place the veal into a heated pan with enough canola oil to come up about halfway of the thickness of the veal. Sautee until golden brown, turning once to finish, about 7-8 minutes total cooking time. Remove from the pan and season with a touch of salt. Garnish with the tomato salad and the arugula. Sprinkle over some shaved parmesan and if desired, lightly drizzle some juice from the tomato maceration over the veal and arugula. Serve with lemon wedges if desired as well.

Chilled Gazpacho Soup

(From Chef Colin Brown, Royal Park Hotel, Rochester)

Serves eight

Ingredients

- 3 cups tomatoes, red ripe, seeded and diced
- 2 cups red bell pepper, diced medium
- 2 cups red onions, diced medium
- 1/2 cup celery, diced medium
- 2 cups cucumber, diced medium
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 cups organic V8 Juice
- pinch cayenne
- ¼ cup cilantro
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- white pepper & salt to taste
- ½ lime juice

Mix diced tomatoes, peppers, red onions, celery and cucumber together in a medium bowl. Divide the mixture in half and separate in two bowls.

Add garlic to one of the bowls and empty into blender. Add vinegar to the blender and puree until smooth. Add the vegetable juice, cayenne and cumin to the blender. Blend. Add the puree to the bowl of diced vegetables. Refrigerate overnight. Garnish with lemon and cilantro.

Pizza Margherita

(From Chef Robert Young, Vinoteca, Royal Oak)

Ingredients

- One serving of rolled pizza dough
- 4 fresh roma tomatoes
- 3 ounces of shredded mozzarella
- 1 ounce fresh mozzarella
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 ounce fresh basil
- 1/2 ounce fresh garlic

- pinch of black pepper
- pinch kosher salt
- pinch of dried oregano

Marinate tomatoes in olive oil, basil, garlic, pepper, salt and oregano for at least one hour. Top crust with shredded mozzarella. Cover with marinated tomatoes and fresh mozzarella. Bake at 425 degrees for eight minutes and then sprinkle with chopped basil.

Tomato-Based Sauce

(From Chef Lynn Miller, Bloomfield Hills, from her Flavor Secrets: Back to the Basics Cookbook)

Makes 3 cups

Ingredients

- 2 cups very ripe tomatoes – any type
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup yellow or white onions, diced small
- ¼ cup peeled celery, diced small
- ½ cup red pepper, diced
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce (Tabasco® etc.)
- ¼ cup chives
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Heat the olive oil in a two-quart saucepan. Add the onions and celery and sauté until soft and golden. Add the red pepper and cook several minutes more. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook several minutes more.

Purée in a food processor or use an immersion blender to the consistency that you like. It can be slightly chunky or very smooth — as you like. Taste the sauce and add more seasonings or tomato paste if necessary.

Primavera Noodles & Puttanesca Sauce

(From Carole Wendling, corporate banquet chef, Matt Prentice Restaurant Group, which has a restaurant in Bloomfield Hills — Northern Lakes Seafood, along with several other restaurants in the region)

Serves two people

Ingredients

Primavera noodles

- 1/2 zucchini
- 1/2 summer squash
- 1/2 carrot

Using a mandolin, julienne the summer squash, zucchini and peeled carrots medium-thick; blanch in boiling salted water for approximately 15 seconds only to soften and not to cook through.

Sauce

- 1 oz. anchovy
- 1 oz. capers
- 3 oz. Spanish onion (small diced)
- 1 pound local heirloom tomatoes (small diced)
- 4 oz. red wine vinegar
- 2 oz. sherry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh Spanish oregano (minced)
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil (minced)
- 1 teaspoon crushed chili flakes
- 1 teaspoon preferred hot sauce
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- salt to taste
- sugar to taste

Using a mortar grind the anchovy, capers and chili flakes together to form a paste.

Combine all other ingredients together in a bowl and refrigerate, use the following day. Adjust seasoning and heat if necessary.

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What's your favorite way to enjoy tomatoes? [Tell us in the comments.](#)