



Tomato varieties are roughly divided into categories based mostly on shape and size.

'Slicing' or 'globe' tomatoes are the usual tomatoes of commerce, used for a wide variety of processing and fresh eating.

Beefsteak tomatoes are large tomatoes often used for sandwiches and similar applications. Their kidney-bean shape, thinner skin, and shorter shelf life make commercial use impractical.

Ox-heart tomatoes can range in size up to beefsteaks and are shaped like large strawberries.

Plum tomatoes are bred with higher solids content for use in tomato sauce and paste and are usually oblong.

Pear tomatoes, as their name implies, are pear-shaped and are based upon the San Marzano types for a richer gourmet paste.

Cherry tomatoes are small and round, often sweet and generally eaten whole in salads.

Grape tomatoes, a more recent introduction, are smaller and oblong and a variation on plum tomatoes which are used in salads.

Campari tomatoes are also sweet and noted for their juiciness, low acidity, and lack of meatiness. They are bigger than cherry tomatoes but are smaller than plum tomatoes.

Early tomatoes and cool-summer tomatoes bear fruit even where nights are cool, which usually discourages fruit set. There are also varieties high in beta carotenes and vitamin A, hollow tomatoes and tomatoes that keep for months in storage.

Tomatoes are also commonly classified as determinate or indeterminate. Determinate, or bush, types bear a full crop all at once and top off at a specific height; they are often a good choice for container growing. Determinate types are preferred by commercial growers who wish to harvest a whole field at one time, or home growers interested in canning. Indeterminate varieties develop into vines that never top off and continue producing until killed by frost. They are preferred by home growers and local-market farmers who want ripe fruit throughout the season.

As an intermediate form, there are plants sometimes known as vigorous determinate or semi determinate; these top off like determinates but produce a second crop after the initial crop. The majority of heirloom tomatoes are indeterminate, although some determinate heirlooms exist.

Tomatoes are now eaten freely throughout the world, and their consumption is believed to benefit the heart, among other organs. They contain the carotene lycopene, one of the most powerful natural antioxidants. In some studies, lycopene, especially in cooked tomatoes, has been found to help prevent

