



HARVEST of the MONTH in the CLASSROOM

TERRIFIC TOMATOES

Grades 2-4 | 1 Class Period



OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will learn about tomatoes, their health benefits, and how they contribute to a balanced diet. They will engage in hands-on activities and discussions to reinforce their understanding.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the main nutrients found in tomatoes, and how do they benefit our bodies?
- How can incorporating tomatoes into our meals improve our overall health?
- Why is it important to educate ourselves about the foods we eat?

MA STATE FRAMEWORKS

Nutrition and Balanced Eating [PK.1.NE]

1. Identify situations when a nutrition-related decision needs to be made (e.g., when trying new foods, choosing snacks and beverages, eating breakfast).
5. Explain benefits of health-promoting eating choices and habits (e.g., staying hydrated, eating fruits and vegetables, eating nutrient-rich foods, limiting foods high in added sugar).

Nutrition and Balanced Eating [3.1.NE]

1. Identify principles of balanced eating (i.e., moderation, eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, consuming nutrient-rich foods, limiting processed foods and foods high in added sugar, drinking water, limiting sugary beverages) when making nutrition-related decisions.

MATERIALS

- Fresh tomatoes (variety of types, if possible)
- Visual aids (posters, pictures of tomatoes and their nutrients)
- Nutritional charts
- Worksheets (for recording observations and benefits)
- Cookbooks or simple recipes featuring tomatoes
- Art supplies (paper, crayons, markers)

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PROCEDURE

Warm Up

1. Discussion Starter
 - a. Ask students if they have eaten tomatoes and how they like to eat them (raw, in sandwiches, sauces, etc.).
 - b. Pass around samples of different types of tomatoes (slicing, Cherry, Roma, etc.) and discuss their colors and shapes. What are some similarities and differences?
2. Health Benefits Overview
 - a. Use the nutrition handout to introduce the key vitamins and nutrients found in tomatoes (vitamin C, potassium, lycopene, etc.).
 - b. Discuss how these nutrients benefit our bodies (e.g. good for the heart, helps skin, supports the immune system, etc.).

Activity #1: Tomato Observation

1. Hands-On Exploration
 - a. Give each student or pair their own tomato to observe. Ask them to note its color, shape, and size. Allow them to smell and touch the tomato, discussing its texture.
 - b. Instruct students to fill out their observation handout.
2. Discussion
 - a. Share their findings as a class. Highlight the diversity in types of tomatoes and review the health benefits.

Activity #2: Make Pico De Gallo

1. Group Work
 - a. Divide students into small groups and hand out a copy of the Pico de Gallo recipe. Provide students with ingredients and materials for preparing the recipe. Remind students to wash their hands first!
 - b. Encourage each group to discuss the ingredients and decide who will be responsible for preparing each part.

Conclusion

Pass out chips to enjoy the pico de gallo. As you snack, have a discussion to review the health benefits of tomatoes discussed earlier. Ask students to share what they learned. Did anything surprise them?

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EXTENSIONS & VARIATIONS

1. Hand out cookbooks and have students find recipes that include tomatoes that they would like to prepare.
2. Allow students to draw their favorite type of tomato or a dish they would like to make with tomatoes. Have them label their drawings with at least one health benefit of tomatoes.

TOMATO BOOKS

Let's Explore Tomatoes! by Jill Colella

Growing Tomatoes: From Seed To Harvest by C. B. Christmas

Tomatoes (First Step Nonfiction — Plant Life Cycles) by Robin Nelson

Strega Nona and Her Tomatoes by Tomie DePaola

TOMATO COOKBOOKS

Simply Tomato: 100 Recipes to Enjoy Your Favorite Ingredient All Year Long by Martha Holmberg

Tomato: 80 Recipes Celebrating the Extraordinary Tomato by Claire Thomson

Tomato Love: 44 Mouthwatering Recipes for Salads, Sauces, Stews, and More by Joy Howard

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HANDOUT

RECIPE // PICO DE GALLO



INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups diced fresh tomatoes, 3 to 4 small tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced white onion
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt, plus more to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash hands, rinse vegetables.
2. Gather cutting boards, knives, and bowl.
3. Chop 3-4 tomatoes into quarter inch cubes.
4. Chop 1 white onion into quarter inch cubes.
5. Chop one bunch of cilantro.
6. Slice lime in half & squeeze to juice.
7. Chop 2 garlic cloves into small pieces.
8. In a medium bowl, stir together the tomatoes, onion, cilantro, lime juice, garlic, and salt.
9. Chill until ready to use.
10. Serve as a dip with tortilla chips.



TERRIFIC TOMATOES

HANDOUT

OBSERVATION WORKSHEET



COLOR

TEXTURE

SMELL

SHAPE

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS (OR MAKE A DRAWING)

TERRIFIC TOMATOES

HANDOUT

TOMATO NUTRITION

