

# Green Tomatoes

It's the time of year to remove the tomato plants. The seasonal changes-temperature, moisture, decreased hours of sunlight dictate the end of tomatoes in the outdoor garden. Often there are green tomatoes still on the vine. There are lots of ways to preserve them or ripen them off the vine. You can ripen, dehydrate, freeze, or preserve the green tomatoes to be used later in recipes. Green tomatoes are great in main dishes, soups, salads, salsas, relishes, dilled pickles, chutneys and desserts.

## **Ripening Green Tomatoes**

Remove the tomato from the plant. Sort the tomatoes according to size and ripeness. Place a layer of unripe tomatoes in the bottom of a brown paper bag. Roll the bag down and clip or tape it closed (light is not necessary to ripen the fruit). Date the bag and label with what's inside (eg. Romas, Cherry, large slicers, etc.) Store in a location that is between 55 degrees F to 70 degrees F. Red color will not develop at temperatures below 50 degrees F. The warmer the storage temperature, the quicker they will ripen. Check the tomatoes weekly and remove the ripened ones. It can take two to three weeks for the tomatoes to ripen.

## **Dehydrating Green Tomatoes**

Wash, peel and core the green tomatoes. Chop in 1/4 - 1/2-inch cubes or slices. Dry in dehydrator at 140 degrees. Rehydrate in water or broth before using.

## **Freezing Green Tomatoes**

Wash and core the green tomatoes. No need to peel them. Cut in preferred style-slices, cubes, etc. Spread the tomatoes on a cookie sheet in a single layer and freeze. Place the frozen tomatoes in a freezer-proof container or bag (there is a small snowflake on the bottom of the container if freezer proof). You can make fried green tomatoes directly out of the freezer. Dredge in flour and fry. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## **Canning Green Tomatoes**

Canned green tomatoes can be used in a variety of recipes. Wash, core and slice green tomatoes. Pack loosely in pint or quart canning jars. Add citric acid or bottled lemon juice to achieve a safe acid level (2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes; 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid per pint of tomatoes). Add a 1/4 teaspoon of pickling salt to each jar, if desired. Cover with boiling water to 1/2 inch of the top of the jar. Water Bath can quarts 45 minutes and pints 40 minutes. When ready to use, drain and use in an approved green tomato recipe.

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