

Carrboro Farmers' Market

Locally Grown  Nationally Known

July 3, 2004

Recipe of the Week  featuring **Cherry Tomatoes**

from **Sheri Castle** of **Creative Cooking with Sheri Castle**

Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes

I don't know what happened to Spring this year, but I suspect I missed those three days. The good part of summer starting in May is that we are already enjoying fresh tomatoes. I see plenty of boxes of those divine, unbelievably sweet and tender Sungold cherry tomatoes throughout the market.

Although Sungolds are delicious straight from the box or tossed into salads, they are also good lightly cooked. In this recipe, they are warmed up with butter, olive oil, salt and lots of fresh basil. They are quite versatile, so try using this recipe as: a side dish, a sauce for hot pasta, a topping for grilled chicken or fish, tucked into a fluffy omelet, on top of crusty garlic bread as a type of Bruschetta.

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
2 pints cherry tomatoes, preferably Sungolds
1/4 cup sliced fresh basil leaves
Salt and pepper

1. Heat the oil and butter over medium-high heat in a large skillet.
2. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring often, until the tomato skins soften and start to crinkle, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the basil.
4. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

By the way, refrigeration is a mortal enemy of good tomatoes! Just leave them on your kitchen counter and eat them up as soon as possible.

www.shericastle.com

Tomatoes for dessert?
(See the other side!)

Chapel Hill Carrboro Farmers' Markets

Carrboro Farmers' Market  Saturdays  March 20 – December 19

Carrboro Farmers' Market  Wednesdays  April 14 – October 20

Southern Village Farmers' Market  Thursdays  May 6 – Late September

Fruit or Vegetable? You be the Judge

One of the two questions I get asked most often is, "Is the tomato a fruit or a vegetable?" (The other is, "Why don't tomatoes taste like they used to?") I usually respond with, "What do you like to call it?" I wait for the person to reply, either fruit or vegetable, and answer "You're right." Scientifically speaking, the tomato is a fruit because it develops from a botanical ovary, the enlarged portion of the pistil, which contains the ovules, or egg cells. Legally speaking, it functions as vegetable because it's generally not served as a dessert and our government can raise revenue with it classified as such while financially protecting our farmers. I'm not kidding.

This is what Supreme Court Justice Horace Gray said in 1893: "Botanically speaking, tomatoes are the fruit of the vine, just as are cucumber, squash, beans and peas. But in the common language of the people, whether sellers or consumers of provisions, all these are vegetables which are grown in kitchen gardens, and...are usually served at dinner in, with or after the soup, fish or meats...and not, like fruits generally, as dessert."

The classification of tomatoes became an issue for the U.S. Supreme Court following a dispute between John Nix, a tomato importer who claimed the tomato was a fruit, and a U.S. Customs agent at the Port of New York who considered it a vegetable and therefore subject to tariff. Under the Tariff Act of 1883, in a move to protect American farmers from competition, a 10 percent import tax was levied on vegetables while fruits remained duty free.

In spite of Justice Gray's decision, the tomato has found more and more creative and tasty ways to appear in desserts. As testimony to this, you'll find some wonderful recipes for tomato-based desserts in this book (see pages 123-29).

from **Vegetarian Times**
August 2003

Peach-Tomato Pie

Serves 8

The Pennsylvania Dutch have been cooking peaches and tomatoes together since the 1850's, enjoying the many varieties of available tomatoes, especially the yellow and orange ones. The amount of sugar you use depends on the type and sweetness of the peaches, so you will want to adjust the sugar according to taste. Some cooks put a cinnamon stick in the pie rather than using the ground spice. The cinnamon stick flavors the pie without discoloring the peaches. The Pennsylvania Dutch also make a dumpling-type dough for the top crust, which rises during the baking and absorbs some of the juice. But a short pastry crust works well too.

Short pastry crust

½ cup (1 stick) unsweetened butter, softened
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 ¾ cups pastry flour
1 tsp. salt
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Peach-Tomato Filling

5 ½ cups peeled, sliced peaches
4 cups tomatoes, seeded and sliced into strips
¼ cup slivered almonds
½ cup coarsely chopped prunes or dried apricots
Shredded zest of ½ lemon
½ cup granulated sugar
3 to 3 ½ Tbs. potato starch or tapioca starch
1 tsp. ground cinnamon or nutmeg
1/8 cup fresh lime juice
Sugar for garnish

1. To make Short Pastry Crust: Combine butter and sugar in mixing bowl, and using an electric mixer, beat until creamy. Fold in flour, salt, egg and vanilla, and mix well. Wrap in plastic or wax paper, and chill dough for 30 minutes.
2. To make Peach-Tomato Filling: Combine peaches, tomatoes, almonds, prunes and lemon zest in mixing bowl. Mix together sugar, potato starch and cinnamon, and stir into fruit mixture. Add lime juice.
3. Preheat oven to 350F. Spray deep 10-inch pie plate or small casserole or baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pour mixture into prepared pie plate, and pat down with spatula. Set aside.
4. Turn dough out onto work surface sprinkled with flour, and roll out. Carefully place dough over pie filling.
5. Bake 40 to 45 minutes. Remove from oven, and sprinkle sugar over top. Serve hot or at room temperature.