

# Using Green Tomatoes

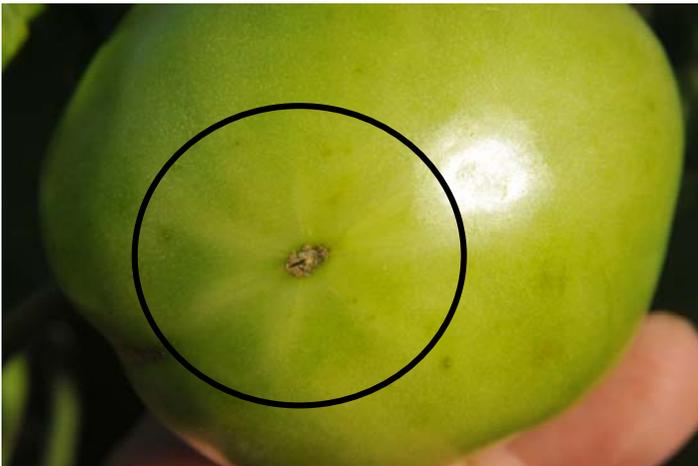


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If you still have tomatoes in your garden as the weather cools in autumn, you can leave them on the vine until mature or until a frost is forecast. Before the first frost, however, pick any remaining tomatoes and bring them inside. With proper storage you may be able to have ripe tomatoes all the way to Thanksgiving time or even later.

## Choose the Right Tomatoes for Storage

Not all green tomatoes will ripen off the vine. They must have reached a certain phase of maturity called the "mature green stage." Look for full-sized tomatoes with a white, star-shaped zone on the bottom end of the green fruit. Also, on maturing green tomatoes, skin at the blossom end may be beginning to change color from green to pink or red.



Separate immature green tomatoes from mature green tomatoes. The immature tomatoes can still be used in green tomato recipes or canned. Green tomatoes do not have to be fried. Try the recipe on the back, or look at the wide variety of recipes found online.

## Prepare the Tomatoes

Discard any mature green tomatoes with defects

such as rots or breaks in the skin. Separate the remaining tomatoes into three groups for storage: those that are mostly red, those that are just starting to turn color, and those that are still green. This will help track which need to be "harvested" first.

Place the tomatoes on cardboard trays or cartons. If you are stacking tomatoes, place newspapers between the layers. Store the tomatoes at as close to 55 degrees as possible, but definitely no lower than 50 degrees. As the fruits begin to turn, remove them and continue ripening at 70 degrees.

## Keep an Eye on Your Stored Tomatoes

Be sure to check the tomatoes frequently to retrieve any that are almost ripe. Remove and discard any damaged tomatoes immediately so the rot does not spread to remaining tomatoes.

Stored tomatoes can be kept in dim light or even in complete darkness. They do not need light to ripen.

Information adapted from:

"Last Tomatoes of the Season," Ward Upham, *Kansas State University Research and Extension Horticulture Newsletter*, October 1, 2013

"Tomatoes," Charles Marr, *Kansas State University/Sedgwick County Extension Horticulture Report*, April, 2003

"How to Ripen Green Tomatoes Off the Vine," Carol Savonen (source: Ross Penhallegon), *Oregon State University Extension*, November 1, 2007.

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## ROASTED GREEN TOMATOES

An easy way to use up end-of-season green tomatoes is to roast them. Once roasted they can be eaten as-is, either hot or cold, or used in recipes that call for ripe tomatoes. Try them in salsas, soups, stews, pasta sauces or as a pizza or bruschetta topping. If you have many green tomatoes, roast and freeze them in easily thawed batches for use throughout the winter.

### Ingredients

green tomatoes, sliced in half with stem sections removed  
extra virgin olive oil  
sea salt  
freshly ground pepper

### Instructions

Arrange the tomatoes in a broiler-proof baking dish or pan  
Drizzle with olive oil, making sure all surfaces are lightly coated  
Turn tomatoes cut-side up  
Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste  
Broil for 10 to 15 minutes

If not serving immediately, refrigerate or freeze.

Adapted from "Roasted Green Tomatoes," Tabitha Alterman, *Mother Earth News*, October 8, 2009.