

Green Tomatoes

Time to empty out the greenhouses! Pull all the potential food, compost the plants, remove the irrigation tape. Then add compost for next year! ...and start all over again in the spring. This is how we put the greenhouses to sleep every fall for the winter. For you, this process means green tomatoes! Cooking them green may be your best bet. Some of them may ripen so here is the process according to Growveg.com. Although, look for the ones that may be showing a bit of a blush, or losing the green!

What Makes Tomatoes Ripen?

Contrary to popular belief, windowsills are not the best place for ripening up tomatoes. Take a close look at your tomato plants and you will learn why: surprisingly, tomatoes often start to ripen on the opposite side of the fruit to the sunny side although not all varieties show this. So, plenty of light is not required for ripening and, in fact, it tends to make the skins of the fruits harder.

Temperature, on the other hand, is a very important factor. The warmer a tomato fruit is the quicker it will ripen. So you can slow down ripening by placing tomatoes in a cool area or speed them up with moderate warmth.

The third factor that speeds up ripening is a gas called ethylene. This is the gas that is used commercially with tomatoes and other fruits that are picked green before shipping and then ripened for sale. Although this all sounds very artificial and leads to rather bland-tasting produce, ethylene is actually naturally released by ripening fruits such as bananas, apples and tomatoes. So, placing a ripe banana or apple in with some green tomatoes in an enclosed space helps to speed up the ripening process.

There are several ways to ripen tomatoes indoors:

Placing a ripening banana or apple in an enclosed bag with green tomatoes helps them to ripen as the fruit releases ethylene

- In a cardboard box: Line the box with newspaper (or use fruit cardboard if it came from a grocery store) and place the green tomatoes on top in a single layer with a little space between each. Cover with another single layer of newspaper and leave somewhere warm. Check regularly. Another variation of this method is to place the tomatoes in a wooden drawer although you would be lucky to find a spare drawer in my house!
- In a paper bag: Put 5 -10 tomatoes in a paper bag with a ripening banana, apple or tomato and leave in a warm place. Periodically open it up to check for any that show signs of mold or rotting.
- Large glass jars or plastic bags: Another way to concentrate the effect of ethylene involves placing 2-4 large tomatoes in a jar or bag along with a ripening fruit and then sealing it. However, the combination of moisture and warmth can encourage mold so it is usually best to put holes in the bag or regularly open and check the jar.

For each of these methods the best results come from tomatoes that are already starting to show a yellowy-orange tinge indicating that they are ready to ripen. You can have success with fully green tomatoes but they will take longer and may not be so flavorful.

Fried Green Tomatoes, from Allrecipes.com

4 large green tomatoes

2 eggs

1/2 cup milk

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup cornmeal

1/2 cup bread crumbs

2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 quart vegetable oil for frying

Slice tomatoes 1/2 inch thick. Discard the ends.

Whisk eggs and milk together in a medium-size bowl. Scoop flour onto a plate. Mix cornmeal, bread crumbs and salt and pepper on another plate. Dip tomatoes into flour to coat. Then dip the tomatoes into milk and egg mixture. Dredge in breadcrumbs to completely coat.

In a large skillet, pour vegetable oil (enough so that there is 1/2 inch of oil in the pan) and heat over a medium heat. Place tomatoes into the frying pan in batches of 4 or 5, depending on the size of your skillet. Do not crowd the tomatoes, they should not touch each other. When the tomatoes are browned, flip and fry them on the other side. Drain them on paper towels.

Curried Green Tomatoes Found on thekitchn.com

Adapted from the Boston Cooking School Cook Book, 1948

2 Tbs butter

2 Tbs minced onion

1 tsp curry powder

2 cups green tomatoes, chopped

Salt and pepper

Melt butter, add onion and cook slowly until yellow. Add curry powder and tomatoes and cook until heated thoroughly.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

5 cups or so of roasted peppers, mostly red but a couple small green, yellow and orange ones

2 cloves of roasted garlic, smashed

1 can of garbanzo beans

Cayenne pepper

Cumin

Coriander

simmer a bit over medium-low heat, then add

1 cup light coconut milk

Add more seasoning to taste