The goal of the How to Nourish With lesson series is to provide adults and older children with helpful information and demonstrations about selecting, preparing, cooking with, and storing vegetables. This basic knowledge may encourage families to include vegetables more often as a mainstay of family meals and snacks.

Objectives:
1. Adults will explain a health benefit provided by tomatoes.
2. Adults will explain how to select tomatoes.
3. Adults will discuss cost- and time-effective strategies for incorporating tomatoes into family meals.
4. Adults will discuss preparation and storage techniques of tomatoes, including cleaning, cutting, peeling, cooking, and storing.
5. Adults will make and taste food that includes tomatoes.

Total Time: ~1 hour

Materials
- Samples of types of tomatoes or printed visuals to show class if tomatoes are not in season or you are unable to purchase tomatoes.
- Ingredients for demonstration recipe(s):
- Printed handouts

Preparation Required
- Read through lesson
- Copy handouts
- Recipe preparation (30 minutes)

Tomato, Basil, Mozzarella Appetizer
1. Slice 8-10 tomatoes: leave 3 whole for cutting and making tomato paste
2. Slice mozzarella cheese and bread
3. Layer tomatoes and mozzarella on sliced bread and place on a cookie sheet, top with a basil leaf or basil cut into thin ribbons and drizzle with olive oil
4. Place in fridge until time of service

**Spaghetti Sauce**
1. Gather needed ingredients as listed on tomato handout to assemble sauce in lesson

*NOTE: This lesson is best taught when tomatoes are in season (mid- to late summer).*
LESSON PLAN

Introduction:
Time: 3 minutes

- Welcome everyone to the class and thank them for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend.
- Take a moment to introduce yourself and the Food $ense program.
- Tell participants that the things they learn about tomatoes will help them have a healthier diet, be able to prepare healthier meals at home, and may help them to want to incorporate tomatoes into their favorite meals. Recipes will be cost-effective and quick.
- **Ask the class:** Raise your hands if you have used tomatoes in one form at least once a week.
  - Call on 1-2 participants to share these ideas.
- **Ask the class:** What are some of your favorite recipes that use tomatoes?
  - Ask 1-2 participants to share these recipe ideas.
- Tomatoes are one of the most commonly used vegetables and are used in many different forms.
- **Ask the class:** What are some barriers you have to cooking with tomatoes regularly in the home?
  - The ones from the store don’t taste good or have no taste at all.
  - Nobody in my family thinks they like tomatoes.
  - I don’t know how to cook them.
  - I don’t know how to pair them with other foods.
  - I don’t know how to season them.
  - They are too expensive.
- The objective of this class is to teach tips on how to select, prepare and serve tomatoes in delicious and cost-effective ways.
- Distribute handouts and encourage the class to take notes and ask questions if any arise.

Objective 1: **Adults will explain a health benefit provided by tomatoes.**
Activity: Discussion about a health benefit of tomatoes
Time: 2 minutes

- *Eating Well* magazine says that eating tomatoes “thrills taste buds and fights disease”.
- Teach class about lycopene. Lycopene is a pigment in tomatoes that gives them their red color.
- Diets rich in lycopene from foods like tomatoes decrease risk for prostate, lung and stomach cancer, heart disease and age-related diseases. Other foods high in lycopene include watermelon, grapefruit, and guava.
- This association is not found with lycopene in the supplemental form. So, you have to eat the vegetables and fruit to get the health benefits.
- Lycopene is best absorbed with a little added fat and is also better absorbed when cooked (like in a sauce). There are many other nutrients in both fresh and processed forms of tomatoes in the diet.

Objective 2: **Adults will understand how to select the best tomatoes.**
Activity: Discuss how to choose ripe tomatoes
Time: 10 minutes

- **Ask class:** Can anyone tell me what types of tomatoes they cook with?
  - Beefsteak
  - Roma
  - Cherry
  - Canned
Discuss different types of tomatoes and the best uses for each type.

- **Beefsteak tomatoes** are large and most commonly used on sandwiches and in salads because of their size.
- **Roma tomatoes** are great to eat by themselves or salads.
  - Fleshy and have few seeds.
  - Also make a great tomato paste
- **Cherry and grape tomatoes** are great snacks and great in salad.
  - Less moisture than other tomatoes so the salad is not watery if it must stand for a period of time.
- **Canned tomatoes** store for a long time and are easy to put into dishes quickly. Some come pre-seasoned, which is convenient for some recipes. When fresh tomatoes are not in season and are very expensive and not as tasty, canned tomatoes are an excellent option.

**Ask the class:** How do you know when a tomato is ripe?

- **Have sample tomatoes to show class or printed pictures of ripe tomatoes**
- **Look for tomatoes with a scarlet red skin**
  - If there is any green or light red showing near the stem end that means it's been picked before ripening fully and it likely won't taste as robust. This means that the tomato will have a bland flavor or may taste more like grass than a tomato.
- **Examine the skin for any bruises or soft spots**
  - Spots will cause a tomato to rot faster.
  - If you choose a tomato with a soft spot, just eat it quickly.
- **The tomato should have a good, tomatoey smell**
  - If it doesn’t have a good smell, it likely will not get ripe and will have a bland flavor.
- **Weight of the tomato is important.**
  - If it feels heavy for its size, it is more likely to be juicy and ripe.

Choose locally grown tomatoes over those grown farther away, if possible.

- These tomatoes will be fresher, have a better taste and you have a better chance of getting a fresher, better-tasting tomato.
- Also a great way to support local farmers.
- Eating Well magazine also says that: “naturally ripened tomatoes are such a far cry from their under-ripe and artificially ripened counterparts that you may discover that what you thought was a mealy, flavorless salad filler is actually a succulent, tangy-sweet fruit that will soon become your favorite.”

*Place pot of water on stove to boil: will be used to blanch tomato*

**Objective 3:** Adults will understand cost- and time-effective strategies for incorporating tomatoes into family meals

**Activity:** Discussion

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Ask the class:** What are some of your favorite ways to incorporate tomatoes into your family meal times?
- On sandwiches (meat, or grilled cheese), hamburgers, etc.
In salads: Be creative!
- Tomato, basil, spinach salad
- Feta cheese tomato salads

On pizza (tomato slices or tomato sauce)
- Oven-roasted tomatoes: Toss cherry tomatoes or Roma tomato halves (cut side up) in olive oil, salt and pepper and place in oven until caramelized. This technique brings out a great flavor and texture to use in recipes.
- Fresh tomato salsa: Dice tomatoes, onions and peppers and add some fresh cilantro to make a great, fresh pico de gallo salsa for chips and dip or other Mexican meals. Get creative with your salsas; try different peppers and other ingredients such as corn and black beans to make them different and exciting.

- **Ask the class:** How many of you use canned, diced or pureed tomatoes in your cooking? Can any of you share some of these ideas?

  - Tomatoes are available year-round but their peak season is June-August. In more expensive off seasons, canned diced tomatoes are a great, cost-effective alternative to use in recipes.
  - Whole tomatoes: this product is made from the best fruit. Tomatoes with less quality are cut up more.
    - Great in spaghetti sauce, tomato soups
    - Can be placed in pico de gallo salsa
    - Drained tomatoes can also be great on pizza
  - Crushed tomatoes: These are mashed and sent through a strainer to catch most of the seeds. This product is slightly chunky and provides a great texture.
    - Great in less chunky tomato sauces (pizza sauce)
  - Chopped tomatoes: These have been seeded and peeled and are ready to dump in some of your favorite tomato-containing recipes.
    - In guacamole
    - In omelets
  - Sauce: Like very thick tomato juice. They work well in:
    - Pasta sauce
    - Chili
    - Curry dishes
    - Soups
  - Paste: These tomatoes have been boiled and excess moisture has been removed. Available in small cans or tubes. This product works as a great, flavorful thickener for:
    - Soups
    - Homemade salad dressings (mix with olive oil, oregano or basil)

- **Ask the class:** Have any of you made your own tomato sauce or paste?
  - Making tomato sauce or paste can be a great way to use extra tomatoes when they are in season and will be great for using them at a later date. This is cheaper too!
  - Tell class we will show them how to do this in a demo later.

**Objective 4:** Adults will understand preparation and storage techniques of tomatoes, including cleaning, cutting, peeling, cooking, and storing.
Activity: Demonstration of cutting a tomato, peeling a tomato and how to make a tomato paste
Time: 15 minutes

- Turn off boiling water but keep it on the stove-
- Place a new sauce pan on the stove and bring two cups of water to boil-

- **Ask the class:** How do you regularly store tomatoes in your homes?
  - Storage tips include:
    - Keep tomatoes in a cool place but not in the fridge. Storing them in the fridge may destroy their fantastic flavor.
    - Do not wash tomatoes until they are needed to reduce rotting.
    - Keep tomatoes from being bruised as this will also contribute to rotting.

- **Demonstrate how to cut a tomato:**
  1. Wash the tomato and wipe dry with a clean paper towel
  2. Using a large, sharp knife, remove the stem and the core
  3. Place the tomato on a cutting board and slice in half perpendicular to the stem end. This will make the tomato retain more juice and keep its shape better
  4. Cut crosswise and dice

- Tomatoes are often peeled if you are going to use them to make a paste or sauce.
  - **Demonstrate how to peel a tomato:**
    - Place 3 Roma tomatoes in the first pot of boiling water for about 30 seconds. This process is called blanching.
    - Carefully remove tomato with large slotted spoon or pour water and tomato into a strainer in the sink.
    - Allow tomato to cool for 1 minute, or until you can touch it.
    - The peel can then be removed by lightly rubbing on the tomato.
    - Can be frozen at this point.

- **Demonstrate how to make tomato sauce or paste:**
  - Place the 3 Roma tomatoes you just blanched in the second pot of water you put on the stove to boil.
  - Allow them to simmer or cook down until they reach desired consistency, about 5 minutes for sauce and 8 minutes for paste. This time will vary depending on the amount of tomatoes used.
    - At this point, the paste is ready to use.
    - Pasta sauce or paste freezes well. It’s a good idea to freeze it in small amounts such as ice cube size (ice cube trays work wonders for this) and simply package them in heavy duty freezer bags, pulling out the amount you need for recipes.

**Objective 5:** *Adults will make and taste something that includes tomatoes.*

**Activity:** Cooking demonstration of 2 tomato-based recipes
**Time:** 10 minutes

- **Spaghetti Sauce Demonstration**
  1. In a large sauce pan, combine 2 cans of diced tomatoes, one small can of tomato sauce and 1 cup of tomato paste from cutting demonstration.
  2. Stir and add in available spices to taste
a. Spice examples: 1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning, 1 tsp. oregano, ¼ tsp. crushed garlic OR garlic salt, salt and pepper to taste.
3. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally as needed.

- Mozzarella Recipe Demonstration
  1. Explain the technique used to make tomato mozzarella salad and give participants a sample

**Conclusion: Summary and Regroup**

**Time: 5 minutes**

Thank class for coming. 
Ask participants if they have any further questions or ideas they would like to share
Encourage participants to complete available questionnaires for Food $ense and to come again
How to slice a tomato:

Types of tomatoes:

Roma Tomato

Beefsteak Tomatoes

Cherry Tomato

Fresh Mozzarella and Tomato Salad
Tomato Goodness

Now write down some good ideas about how to prepare the most delicious tomatoes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beefsteak Tomatoes</th>
<th>Roma Tomatoes</th>
<th>Cherry Tomatoes</th>
<th>Diced or Whole Canned Tomatoes</th>
<th>Tomato Paste or Sauce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What are some tips for cutting tomatoes?  What new cooking methods do I want to try?
Delicious Tomato Recipes

Spaghetti Sauce
Food $ense curriculum recipe

- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 can tomato paste OR 1 cup fresh paste
- 1 Tbsp. oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ¼ tsp. chopped garlic OR garlic salt
- 1 tsp. sugar

1. In a large pan, combine diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato paste. Add herbs and spices to taste. Leave on heat until hot enough to serve and until desired consistency.
2. If desired, add ground beef. Simply brown meat, drain off fat, and add to sauce.

Serving suggestions: Pasta, pizza, and breadstick dip.

Tomato, Mozzarella, Basil Appetizers
Food $ense curriculum recipe

- 4 large tomatoes
- 2 cups (8 oz.) mozzarella cheese
- 8-10 fresh basil leaves, whole or sliced into thin ribbons
- 4 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Salt
- Pepper, preferably fresh-ground
- 1 loaf of small, hard-crusted bread (baguette)

1. Slice tomatoes and mozzarella in slices.
2. Place a slice of cheese and tomato slice on bread and place basil leaf on top
3. Drizzle with olive oil
4. Salt and pepper to taste