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Eat, Learn, Sell – Eating by Example - 2.20.15

Sun-Dried Tomatoes: Flavorful fresh tomatoes are hard to source in the winter and one of the age-old preservation methods of saving summer tomatoes is sun-drying the fruit. Yes fruit – tomatoes are technically a fruit. Sun-dried tomatoes are ripe tomatoes that lose most of their water content after spending time drying in the sun. (Dehydrated or tunnel dried tomatoes may be artificially dried at temperatures up to 200° F. in a matter of hours, a process which may burn or scorch the fragile tomato.)

Dried fruit is ready to eat or use right from the box, but when cooking or baking with dried fruit consider your recipe preparation and adjust liquids accordingly. If using dried fruit in a wet recipe like sauces or dressing, no hydration is necessary before adding the dried fruit, but remember dried fruit will draw moisture away from the sauce. As a general rule, when baking with dried fruit, hydrate the fruit in a warm liquid, and drain well before adding to the batter or sponge.

The drying process begins with a twelve-hour exposure to the burning of elemental sulfur, a substance which naturally occurs in nature and which is used in the processing of fine wines and balsamic vinegars. The sulfur ensures that the tomatoes retain their natural brilliant red color and a sweet intense flavor. Sulfites (SO₂) are also used as a preservative to inhibit microbial growth and retain product color in sun dried fruit and many other food products, medications and beverages.

If you're part of the less than 1% of the population that is severely allergic to sulfites, you should avoid dried fruit, as well as most wine, some medications, jams, vegetable juice, many condiments, some potato chips, and other foods that contain sulfites. **IF** people are allergic to sulfur (sulfites) OR if someone is selling to health-conscious customers – these tomatoes can also be purchased without sulfur. The tomato is dried and preserved with salt (3-4%). The *non-sulfured* tomato is NOT a 'Ready to Eat' product because it needs to be hydrated with water before using.

There are a few drawbacks for this product. One is the high sugar content found in these tomatoes. The vast majority of the calories in sun dried tomatoes come from sugar. A single, 1-ounce serving carries 11 grams of sugar alone. Anyone who struggles with diabetes should be careful to budget this sugar into their daily sugar intake before adding sun dried tomatoes to their diet. Another challenge is the high sodium content - One ounce of sun dried tomatoes contains almost 600 milligrams of sodium, constituting almost 25 percent of your daily recommended intake. Anyone with history of heart disease should be careful of this high sodium content.

The health benefits of sundried tomatoes: these tomatoes are very high in both dietary fiber and vitamin C. Fiber works in the human body to improve digestion and metabolism, while vitamin C is an essential part of the human immune system. Other nutrients that sun dried tomatoes hold in abundance include vitamin K, potassium, copper, and manganese. Sun Dried Tomatoes contain *Lycopene* a phytochemical and proven antioxidant that fights free radicals in the body. Ounce per ounce sun dried tomatoes have 12 times the amount of Lycopene than a raw tomato! Recent studies show that a tomato rich diet is associated with a reduced risk of certain conditions including; Prostate cancer, digestive disorders, breast, lung and cervical cancers, and heart disease.

Ideas for Using Sun Dried Tomatoes

Condiments

- Sun dried tomato caper pesto
- Tomato - golden raisin chutney
- Sun dried tomato and garlic spice rub
- Italian seasoned breadcrumbs with sun dried tomatoes
- Sun dried tomato spicy jelly
- Chunky sun dried tomato ketchup
- Bread rolled with a sun dried tomato pesto spread
- Spinach, feta, sun dried tomato, olive spread

Appetizers

- Sun dried tomato cream cheese spread
- Eggplant caponata with sun dried tomatoes
- Giant olives stuffed with garlic sliver and diced sun dried tomato
- Popcorn, garlic butter and sun dried tomato bits
- Sun dried tomato topped focaccia
- Sun dried tomato, spinach quiche
- Spicy muffuletta salad with sun dried tomatoes
- Feta, sun dried tomato filo triangles
- Grilled pizza topped with Greek olives, spinach and sun dried tomatoes
- Sun dried tomato spiral bread loaf sprinkled with Parmesan
- White beans, garlic puree with sun dried tomatoes
- Sun dried tomato tapenade topped crostini
- Sun dried tomato and Asiago cheese topped wheat crackers
- Sun dried tomato aioli dip
- Hot artichoke, Parmesan and sun dried tomato dip
- Spicy sun dried tomato jam topped crostini
- Sun dried tomato Parmesan scones
- Marinated artichoke and sun dried tomato spread
- Romano cheese, black pepper, sun dried tomato "refrigerator dough" breadsticks
- Hero sliders filled with meat and cheese, marinated artichokes hearts and sun dried tomatoes

Soups, Sauces

- Creamy sun dried tomato soup
- Italian vegetable soup with sun dried tomato pesto topping
- White bean, pasta, and sun dried tomato soup
- Chunky sun dried tomato pasta sauce
- Sun dried tomato pasta
- Sun dried tomato Alfredo sauce
- Tuna, caper, anchovy and sun dried tomato sauce
- Triple tomato sauce - fresh, canned and sun dried
- Double tomato salsa - fresh and sun-dried tomatoes

Sides

- Sun dried tomato, chive, sour cream stuffed baked potato
- Spring asparagus dressed with sun dried tomato vinaigrette
- Parsley, red onion, sun dried tomato couscous salad

- Lentil soup enriched with sun dried tomatoes and spinach
- Fresh spinach, white bean, sun dried tomato salad
- Savory rice with sun dried tomato herb seasoning
- Grilled polenta squares with sun dried tomato-pine nut topping
- Sun dried tomato mashed potatoes
- Creamy chive and sun dried tomato baked grits

Entrees

- Shrimp. sun dried tomato, broccoli pasta
- Char-grilled chicken, cannelloni bean, sun dried tomato salad
- Sicilian-style meatballs blended with sun dried tomatoes and golden raisins
- Spaghetti with an olive oil, tuna, caper sun dried tomato quick sauce
- Sun dried tomato ravioli, tortellini & lasagna
- Penne pasta, sun dried tomato, chicken cream sauce
- Sun dried tomato, lemon peel, kalamata olive sauce over steamed clams
- Baked halibut topped with sun dried tomato Italian bread crumbs
- Grilled grouper with sun dried tomato, caper, anchovy, white wine sauce
- Spicy shrimp tossed with celery pieces and diced sun dried tomatoes
- Roasted beef tenderloin stuffed with roasted garlic and sun dried tomatoes
- Ricotta, spinach, sun dried tomato stuffed chicken breasts
- Soufflé flavored with goat cheese and sun dried tomato
- Savory Italian sausage, sun dried tomato, pine nut sauce orzo
- Greek flavored turkey burgers - feta, sun dried tomatoes and red onion
- Pasta with a trio of grilled peppers and chipotle seasoned sun dried tomatoes
- Pine nut, basil, sun dried mascarpone torta
- Spring pasta - sun dried tomatoes, asparagus tips and goat cheese
- California pizza - artichoke hearts, julienne of peppers, sun dried tomatoes and pesto
- Puff pastry tart topped with zucchini, sun dried tomatoes and mozzarella
- Escarole, white bean, sun dried tomato and sausage stew
- Garlic and oil spaghetti topped with sun dried garlicky breadcrumbs
- Farfalle pasta with baby spinach, roasted walnuts, sun dried tomatoes and ricotta
- Spinach, parmesan, sun dried tomato filo rolls
- Summer zucchini fritatta with sun dried tomatoes and Parmesan cheese
- Eggplant slices stacked with dried tomato pesto, Jack and Parmesan cheese
- Seared steaks topped with goat cheese, caper and sun dried tomato butter



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Baby Mixed Carrots with tops: Generally available year round, extreme weather conditions may affect production of baby Mix carrots. Only limited supplies are available during summer months due to hot weather. Comprised of a mixture of yellow, white, purple, black and the standard orange, all carrots are picked at their immature stages for young harvest.

The flavor profiles range from earthy, mild and sweet. All the carrots are characteristically crunchy but



some of the carrots are more prolific and high-yielding, so look for certain carrots to be more main players than others, ie: yellow and orange. (The Purple Haze carrot is a bit of a trickster, as when cooked it fades to orange and when peeled the flesh revealed is orange as well.)

Originally a by-product - baby carrots are harvested at their immature stage as the result of over-crowding seeds during the time of planting, thus crop thinning is required due to competition for the soils nutrients.

Carrot, Baby Peeled Rainbow - Each case usually represents three varieties of

carrots by color: red, yellow and white or orange. This classic gourmet item is a time-saver with 100% yield. The foodservice pack is a 5 lb. cryovac bag containing



an average of 120 carrots per bag. These carrots are peeled and ready to cook; the lack of



necessary prep makes the price a good value. Every carrot is hand peeled from a table sized carrot.