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## Cherry Tomato-A Good Snack of the Season

**The small sized cherry tomato is a new crop to India, which is gaining popularity in metropolitan markets; is consumed as raw fruit in five star hotels owing its size and shape. The red coloured small fruits of cherry tomato having antioxidants and well flavour along with loads of minerals, and is also offering a broad range of nutraceutical benefits.**

### INTRODUCTION

The benefits of consuming various types of fruits and vegetables are much impressive and cherry tomatoes are leaders among all. Out of various vegetables used for regular consumption tomatoes are most popular fresh market vegetable and cherry tomato is one of its kind being vital source of variety of minerals and anti-oxidants, which could enable the human beings in improving their immunity system at large. The berry sized cherry tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum var. cerasiforme* L.), is otherwise called as the *Hami melon* or *Korean persimmon* (*Asian persimmon*, *Japanese persimmon*). In India, this is a new crop which is gaining momentum in urban as well as metropolitan cities of the country, being rich in antioxidants and consumed as fresh salad in upper society and five star hotels besides different taste more in sweeter side. The cherry tomato fruit is red in colour relatively small in size, weighing about 10 to 35g. Tomatoes are an intensely nutritious plant food one can consider cherry tomato as a nutrient dense super food, as it offers a variety of health benefits. The nutritional content of the fruit to supports proper functioning of various systems of the human beings. The enhanced proportion of plant foods in day to day life would reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. They are low in calories but rich in a many of nutrients that are good for human health. It is consisting of four types of carotenoids, viz., alpha, betacaroten, lutein and lycopene.

## HISTORY

The roots of commonly cultivated big size tomato are cherry type (*Lycopersicon esculenta var cerasiformae*). The origin of small fruited cherry tomato found in the Andes in South America which was earlier considered as wild tomato. The British Tomato Growers' Association explains; around 700 A.D, it was cultivated by the *Incas* and *Aztecs* tribes of Mexico. The word "tomato", in fact is derived from the *Aztec* word "tomatil". The first tomatoes were measured tiny, pea-sized plant that grew in wild clusters. The Central American growers took lead in transforming them into the plant which is at present under cultivation. The description of small tomatoes is scripted in a book called Pinax Theatri Botanici, by Gaspard Bauhin or Illustrated Exposition of Plants published in the journal Gastronomica, written by Anna Wexler (1623). This illustration has described that cherry tomatoes did exist in the mid-early 1600s one specific kind as 'clusters in the form of cherries'.

## NUTRIENT COMPOSITION

The highest level nutrients of tomato each 100 gram serving

Sl. No.	Name of the vitamin/mineral	Quantity
1	Vitamin C	23.4 mg
2	Vitamin A	883 IU
3	Potassium	237 mg
4	Calcium	18 mg
5	Phosphorus	24.7 mg
6	Manganese	0.1 mg
7	Vitamin K	7.9 mcg
8	Fiber	1.2 g
9	Folic Acid	15 mg
10	Vitamin B6	0.1 mg
11	Vitamin B3	0.6 %
12	Iron	0.1 mg

Tomatoes are also enriched with a wide array of vital nutrients and antioxidants, includes:

- Alpha-lipoic acid
- Lycopene
- Choline
- Folic acid
- Beta-carotene
- Lutein

Cherry tomatoes are one of the richest sources of vitamin C, which helps in giving a wide range of

benefits to the human beings especially in fighting against carcinogenic cells, rejuvenating skin cells, in addition to preventing cardiac related diseases. It is also helps the human body in preventing the high levels of blood pressure and at large taking the utmost care in maintaining the stamina of the human beings. The nutrient enriched tiny fruit benefits 'vitamin A' in acting as a source of antioxidant, increases the activity of the antibodies, protects the eyes, reduces the levels of the cholesterol and reduces blood contamination chances. The mineral 'Potassium' is a good supplement for heart and diabetes. It is useful in building muscles and increases capability of human brain, Controls blood pressure and increases body metabolism. The presence of 'Manganese' in cherry tomatoes will strengthen the bones and prevent osteoporosis. It also repels off the free radicals by preventing epilepsy. Moreover, it acts as an anti-inflammatory and also takes care of the thyroid gland. Due to the presence of handsome amount of 'fiber', the consumption of cherry tomatoes can controls the sugar levels in the human blood; maintain the cardiac health by preventing the heart stroke. It also maintains proper functioning of kidneys. Avoids the constipation problem due fiber content and promises the healthier intestine. The presence of 'Folic acid' in the fruits of cherry tomato benefits the development of healthy foetus in females and enhances the sperm production in males. It also normalizes the cholesterol level in the blood and good for intestines and digestive system. In addition to this it support the nerve system, prevents early ageing, increase the number of red blood cells and also avoids early dementia.

As it is a natural source of plentiful 'iron', cherry tomatoes will increases the haemoglobin level in the blood, bring up the muscles strength, increases the functioning of the function, sustain body temperature, acts as an oxygen carrier, prevents anaemic condition, boosts up immune system, avoid insomnia and help to gain more concentration by avoiding giddiness. The presence of B3 and B6 vitamins in the fruits of cherry tomatoes, will enable to reduce the LDL, prevents the heart problems, Alzheimer's disease, cataract, diabetes and increases the levels of HDL. It helps in maintaining the brain's health. It also helps in the formation of red blood cells, splitting up the proteins for easy utilisation by the body. Apart from various health benefits, it occupied an important

place in cosmetic industry. Being a rich source of lycopene cherry tomatoes acts as a natural sun block and also prevents hair loss due to the presence of vitamin A.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Consumption of raw fruits gives better health multi-folds compared to the processed foods or fruits in our day to day life. Eating cherry tomatoes in our daily life will enable us to enrich our body with more beneficial

minerals and essential vitamins. Everyone can consume cherry tomato round the year from children to old aged people. It looks more like cherry so children can easily attracted for its size and taste. Hence, a path should be paved to increase the area of cultivation and create the awareness of health benefits among the public. This nutrient rich tiny vegetable should be made available to all categories of the people throughout the country.