According to food expert Harold McGee, at the end of cooking your tomato sauce toss in a few tomato leaves to restore its fresh "green" flavor notes.

**tomato & basil**

**tomatoes**

**Health:** Abundant in the summer in all shapes and colors, tomatoes contain a red pigment called lycopene. Studies show this pigment is a potent cancer fighter and regular consumption of tomatoes and products such as tomato sauce may help lower prostate cancer risk.

**Companion planting:** Tomatoes grow well with basil, parsley, nasturtiums and asparagus.

**About the veggie:** Tomatoes are in a family of plants known as nightshades along with peppers, eggplants, tobacco, and belladonna, a plant also known as deadly nightshade. Because tomatoes resembled this poisonous plant early peoples were reluctant to eat them.

**Etymology:** Because tomatoes were domesticated in Mexico, their name comes from the Aztec term for “plump fruit,” tomatl.

**Flavor:** Although actually a fruit, tomatoes are treated as a vegetable in part due to their unique flavor which combines low sugar content with large amounts of savory glutamic acids and sulphur compounds. Similar flavor properties are also found in meats which is one of the reasons why tomatoes complement so many meaty dishes. The same flavor compounds may also be why rotten tomatoes smell especially foul.

**bassil**

**Etymology:** Its common name is believed to be an abbreviation of the Greek phrase Basilikon phthon, which means "kingly herb."

**Nutrition:** The main ingredient for pesto, basil is loaded with fragrant essential oils that have been shown to reduce inflammation, which may play a role in helping rheumatoid arthritis and other ailments such as heart disease and psoriasis. Each ¼ cup of fresh basil also supplies over 50% of our bodies’ vitamin K requirement which is important for bone health.

**About the herb:** Basil is a member of the tropical genus Ocimum, which originated in Africa and was domesticated in India. There are around 165 species in this genus.

**Varieties:** The standard "sweet basil" of Europe and North America has been cultivated into many different flavor varieties which include lemon, lime, cinnamon, anise and camphor. A variety known as Thai basil has an anise-like aroma, and another called Indian basil has a clove-like scent.

There are many varieties of tomatoes. The Green Zebra variety, shown here, yields a 4-6 ounce fruit.

Basil is a good companion plant as it repels many types of flying insects.

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