

# Wal-Mart Does Organics

On May 12, the New York Times reported a development that has sparked conversation and controversy across North America. U.S. Wal-Mart stores are increasing their organic product selection this summer. The Times article, written by Melanie Warner, states, "at a recent conference, [Wal-Mart's] chief marketing officer, John Fleming, said the company intended to sell organic products for just 10 percent more than their non-organic equivalents." Because of Wal-Mart's size and power in the U.S. food market, this decision has resulted in a flurry of new product development - from organic Frosted Mini Wheats to organic Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. Wal-Mart is already the leading U.S. seller of organic milk.

Most U.S. Wal-Marts have a full grocery section, including produce, but the food selection in Canadian Wal-Marts is usually pretty limited. Wal-Mart has not said whether it intends to bring its new organic products into Canada.

Laura Telford, the executive director of Canadian Organic Growers, feels that Wal-Mart's interest in organics could be a step forward. In a telephone interview with FoodShare, she said, "that's a lot more fields that are producing organically. Is that creating a sustainable local food system? No. Is it a net environmental gain? Yes."

She foresees Wal-Mart exerting "downward pressure" on farmers and hopes that "producers band together

and insist on fair prices." Wal-Mart's contract for organic milk with Organic Valley was the result of repeated negotiations in which Organic Valley, a producers' co-operative, refused the initial price offer. This, says Telford, is what farmers must do - "band together instead of undermining each other," and be willing to say no. She sees potential benefits for regional farmers in this development because "some foods don't travel well," but these producers must choose to enter the market and be able to negotiate for prices.

At FoodShare, we are happy to see healthy, organic food made widely available and affordable, but it is important to us that farmers are paid a fair price for their work. We agree with Telford that it will take cooperation among organic farmers to maintain fair market prices now that Wal-Mart is buying organics.

For its potential to increase access to affordable and healthy food, we applaud Wal-Mart's efforts to offer organic food at "everyday low prices." However, just because something is organic does not mean it is healthy, and heavily processed, fat, sugar, and salt-heavy foods are harmful whether they are organic or not. We hope that reasonably priced produce, organic or otherwise, becomes available in Canada's Wal-Marts, to accompany, if not replace, the processed foods that line its shelves. And we hope that, when that does happen, Canada's Wal-Marts will buy locally and pay a fair price to our farmers.

-- Martin Brown

## In the box this week:

Local harvesting is getting into high gear thanks to all this warm and wet weather we've been having. The conventional box contains local zucchini, peaches, broccoli, cucumbers, tomatoes and corn. The organic box has local lettuce, potatoes, green pepper, Galia melon, hot house tomatoes, beans & red chard. Yum!

FIELD TO TABLE

a project of



# recipes

## Tomato-Mint Quinoa Salad

serves 4

- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 1/4 cups quinoa
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1 pinch salt
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 10 radishes, quartered
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 2 TBS almonds, sliced and toasted
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley fresh
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- salt to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Bring water to boil in a small saucepan. Pour in quinoa, raisins, and a pinch of salt. Cover, and let simmer for 12 to 15 minutes, then remove from heat, and allow to cool to room temperature.
2. Toss together the tomatoes, onion, radish, cucumber, and almonds in a large bowl. Stir in the cooled quinoa, then season with mint, parsley, cumin, lime juice, sesame oil, and salt. Chill 1 to 2 hours before serving.

serves 4

## ALAK TOMATAR (SPINACH & TOMATOES)

- 1lb Spinach, fresh or thawed
- 3 Tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Onion, large and chopped
- 1/4ts Turmeric
- 1tb Ginger, fresh and chopped
- 2 Green chilies (optional)
- 1c Water
- 5tb Butter or margarine
- 1pn Salt
- 1tb Lemon juice

Place spinach, tomatoes, onions, turmeric, ginger and chilies in a saucepan with 1 cup water. Cook, covered, 15 mins over medium-low heat. Remove from heat and cool. Blend in an electric blender to a creamy consistency. Heat butter in a saucepan. Add spinach mixture and salt to taste. Cook for 5 mins over low heat. Add lemon juice and serve.



## featured this week: TOMATO

The tomato probably originated in the highlands on the west coast of South America and then migrated via trading into central America but we don't know exactly when or where because much horticultural knowledge was lost after the arrival of Europeans. The Spanish conquest distributed the tomato throughout their colonies in the Caribbean and to the Philippines, from which point it moved to southeast Asia and then the entire Asian continent. The Spanish also brought the tomato to Europe in the mid 1500's where it was grown only as a decorative plant until well into the 1600's. It didn't become accepted as food in France until the time of the French revolution!

Now of course, it is one of the most widely eaten vegetables (fruit really) in the world and comes in many different sizes, shapes and colours, even striped (the Green Zebra). Tomatoes have been researched widely in the last 10 years for their many nutritional and health attributes and have been found to be protective against a growing list of cancers as the result from the synergy of lycopene with other phytonutrients naturally present in whole tomatoes. These cancers now include colorectal, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers. Before serving, wash tomatoes under cool running water and pat dry. If your recipe requires seeded tomatoes, cut the fruit in half horizontally and gently squeeze out the seeds and the juice. It is especially important when cooking tomatoes to not use aluminum cookware since their high acid content will interact with the metal. This may result in the migration of the aluminum into the food, which will not only impart an unpleasant taste, but more importantly, may have deleterious effects on your health.

- by any other name...
- Solanum lycopersicum- Latin
- tomaat - Dutch
- tomate - French
- tomato - German
- Gojeh Faranghi - Iranian
- pomodoro - Italian
- tomato - Spanish
- tomate - Portuguese

## DELIVERIES

for the week of: August 8th  
orders are due 5 pm Tues. August 1

for the week of August 15th  
orders are due 5pm Tues. August 8

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