

how many calories in tomato

How many calories in tomato is a common question among health enthusiasts, dieters, and culinary experts alike. Tomatoes are a staple in many diets around the world, prized not only for their flavor but also for their numerous health benefits. Understanding the calorie content of tomatoes can help you make informed dietary choices, whether you're counting calories, managing your weight, or simply looking to improve your overall nutrition. In this article, we'll delve into the calorie content of tomatoes, their nutritional profile, health benefits, and how they can fit into your diet.

Caloric Content of Tomatoes

Tomatoes come in various types and sizes, each contributing differently to your total calorie intake. The most commonly consumed variety is the red tomato, but there are also cherry tomatoes, grape tomatoes, and heirloom varieties. Here's a breakdown of the approximate calorie content based on serving size:

- **Raw Tomato (medium, about 123 grams):** Approximately 22 calories
- **Cherry Tomatoes (1 cup, about 149 grams):** Approximately 27 calories
- **Grape Tomatoes (1 cup, about 150 grams):** Approximately 30 calories
- **Heirloom Tomatoes (medium, about 123 grams):** Approximately 22 calories
- **Dried Tomatoes (1 oz, about 28 grams):** Approximately 75 calories

These figures can vary slightly based on the specific variety and ripeness of the tomato, but they provide a general idea of how many calories in tomato products you might consume.

Nutritional Profile of Tomatoes

Tomatoes are low in calories but rich in essential vitamins and minerals. Here's a closer look at the nutritional content of a medium raw tomato (about 123 grams):

- **Calories:** 22
- **Carbohydrates:** 4.8 grams
- **Fiber:** 1.5 grams

- **Protein:** 1.1 grams
- **Fat:** 0.2 grams
- **Vitamin C:** 28% of the Daily Value (DV)
- **Vitamin K:** 12% of the DV
- **Potassium:** 6% of the DV
- **Folate:** 4% of the DV

These nutrients contribute not only to the low-calorie count but also to the overall health benefits of including tomatoes in your diet.

Health Benefits of Tomatoes

In addition to being low in calories, tomatoes offer a variety of health benefits that make them an excellent addition to any diet:

1. Rich in Antioxidants

Tomatoes are an excellent source of antioxidants, particularly lycopene, which has been linked to a reduced risk of chronic diseases. Lycopene is responsible for the red color of tomatoes and has been studied for its potential cancer-fighting properties.

2. Heart Health

Regular consumption of tomatoes may contribute to heart health. The potassium in tomatoes helps regulate blood pressure, while the antioxidants can help reduce inflammation and lower cholesterol levels.

3. Skin Health

The high vitamin C content in tomatoes plays a significant role in skin health. Vitamin C is crucial for collagen production, which helps maintain skin elasticity and firmness. Additionally, lycopene may protect the skin from sun damage.

4. Weight Management

With their low calorie and high water content, tomatoes can help you feel full without consuming too many calories. Including them in your meals can aid in weight loss or maintenance.

5. Digestive Health

Tomatoes contain dietary fiber, which is essential for a healthy digestive system. A diet rich in fiber can help prevent constipation and promote regular bowel movements.

How to Incorporate Tomatoes into Your Diet

Incorporating tomatoes into your daily meals can be easy and delicious. Here are some ideas:

1. **Salads:** Add chopped tomatoes to salads for added flavor and nutrition.
2. **Sandwiches and Wraps:** Use slices of fresh tomato in your sandwiches and wraps for a refreshing crunch.
3. **Soups and Sauces:** Cook tomatoes down into sauces for pasta or soups for a hearty meal.
4. **Salsas:** Combine diced tomatoes with onions, cilantro, and lime juice for a fresh salsa.
5. **Snacks:** Enjoy cherry or grape tomatoes as a healthy snack on their own or with a dip.

Conclusion

In summary, when considering how many calories in tomato, it's clear that they are a nutritious and low-calorie food option that can benefit your health in numerous ways. With a vibrant nutritional profile, tomatoes are not only versatile in the kitchen but also contribute to overall well-being. From salads to sauces, the culinary possibilities are endless. So, don't hesitate to include more tomatoes in your diet and enjoy the delicious taste and health benefits they provide!

Frequently Asked Questions

How many calories are in a medium-sized tomato?

A medium-sized tomato (about 123 grams) contains approximately 22 calories.

Are there more calories in fresh tomatoes or sun-dried tomatoes?

Sun-dried tomatoes contain significantly more calories, with about 139 calories per 100 grams, compared to fresh tomatoes, which have about 18 calories per 100 grams.

How many calories are in a cup of chopped tomatoes?

One cup of chopped tomatoes (about 180 grams) has around 32 calories.

Do different varieties of tomatoes have different calorie counts?

Generally, the calorie count is fairly consistent among different varieties of tomatoes, but some types, like cherry tomatoes, can be slightly higher in calories at around 30 calories per 100 grams.

How many calories are in a slice of tomato?

A medium slice of tomato (approximately 20 grams) contains about 4 calories.

Are there any health benefits to eating tomatoes despite their low calorie count?

Yes, tomatoes are low in calories but rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, such as lycopene, which can contribute to various health benefits.

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