

**Seasonal Eating**  
**Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent**

**Summer Tomatoes**  
**August 2019**

The dog days of summer are here and in the kitchen that calls for cool, easy dishes that refresh and take advantage of the warm season vegetables. A perfect dish that fits that bill is Balsamic Marinated Tomatoes. Even my Dad, who is not a fan of tomatoes, was eating these with a spoon out of the bowl.

There is nothing like the sweet, refreshing taste of summer tomatoes that are full of tomato flavor and juicy and soft in the center. From tomato pie to BLT sandwiches, tomatoes reign supreme. It is one of the things that people coming to the farmers market seek out from day one, although they typically don't come in until around July.

The recipe for today is a simple marinade for the tomatoes. Balsamic vinegar lends a rich yet refreshing flavor with both tang and a hint of sweetness. Combined with a little sugar to balance and some savory herbs and spices, it creates an irresistible sauce that makes you want to slurp it up with a spoon.

I used grape tomatoes cut in half so they absorb the marinade. You could also use the marinade with slices of larger tomatoes for a salad. The fresh mozzarella is added at the end and sprinkled over the top so it remains white and pretty. If you marinate the cheese with the tomatoes, it turns brown from the vinegar but it also gets a tough, rubbery texture. Fresh basil and tomatoes are a natural pair and so thinly sliced basil leaves are sprinkled over the top of the tomatoes and cheese.

This recipe can be used in several ways. You can dip out the tomatoes (or slices of tomato) with a slotted spoon and place on lettuce leaves for a beautiful salad topped with the cheese and basil. Or you can serve it with toasted French bread that people can top with the tomatoes as a crostini appetizer. You can also just serve the tomatoes alone in a bowl as a side dish to grilled meat or burgers or an omelet or quiche.

So stay cool and marinate some tomatoes for a refreshing and delicious summer dish.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)).

**Balsamic Marinated Tomatoes**

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped, fresh basil
- 1-2 pinches kosher salt
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 10 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, diced into 1/4" cubes
- Thinly sliced fresh basil leaves for garnish



In a bowl, whisk together the sugar, vinegar, oil, onion, thyme, garlic salt, basil, salt and pepper. Add the tomatoes and stir to coat. Marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Set out 30 minutes before serving to warm slightly and sprinkle with the mozzarella cheese and sliced basil.