

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**Summer Tomatoes and Basil**  
**July 2020**

Red, vine-ripened, flavorful, juicy tomatoes are the epitome of summer. But getting to all of this gloriousness is an exercise in patience while the sun and soil do their thing and produce tomatoes that don't just look good but actually have flavor. July is the time for tomatoes in their full glory.

Tomatoes are an excellent source of vitamins C and A as well as lycopene which is a powerful antioxidant. So eating tomatoes is not only delicious but also a good healthy choice and cooking tomatoes actually increases the lycopene content so tomato sauces are also a good choice.

Summer tomatoes are so good they can be simply sliced and eaten plain or thrown into a green salad or even made into a sandwich. But if you want to take your tomatoes to the next level, pair them with basil. These two flavors together are a classic and elevate the flavor of each other. They are commonly used in Italian dishes and can be used together in everything from soups to salads to main dishes to pasta dishes.

Caprese Salad is the standard tomato and basil salad with fresh mozzarella, basil and tomatoes layered together and drizzled with some extra virgin olive oil and sometimes balsamic vinegar and, of course, there is tomato basil soup.



But if you want to get a little more exotic with your tomatoes and basil, try Grilled Beef with Steakhouse Tomato Salsa. This is a perfect summer meal of grilled steak topped with tomatoes marinated in a steak sauce vinaigrette. I use either a flank steak or a sirloin steak but whatever you prefer will work. The Montreal steak seasoning can be found with the spices and is great on any grilled meat or poultry. Cook the steak to your preferred doneness and then slice and top with the salsa for a refreshing, beautiful and delicious summer dinner.

When working with basil, keep in mind that it will turn black if it gets too cold so keep it protected in the vegetable bin if you are purchasing it or pick it fresh from the garden. Basil also bruises easily, so use a sharp knife to cut it up - a dull knife will make it turn black. I usually roll up the leaves into a cigar shape and then slice across into shreds.

So this month check out your local farmers market or grocery store for the best of the summer tomatoes and enjoy them while in season with a pairing of fresh basil. Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)).

### **Grilled Beef with Steakhouse Tomato Salsa**

2 teaspoons whole grain mustard

1 tablespoon steak sauce (A-1 style)

2 teaspoons red wine

1 teaspoon Montreal steak seasoning

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 pint cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters (or you can chop whole larger tomatoes)

2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots

1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian flat leaf parsley

1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil

1/2 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary

1 1/2 pounds beef flank steaks or sirloin steaks

Montreal steak seasoning

In a medium bowl, whisk together mustard, steak sauce, wine and steak seasoning. Slowly drizzle in the oil while whisking. Add the tomatoes and shallots. Marinate for at least 30 minutes, if longer place in refrigerator up to overnight. Just before serving, stir in the parsley, basil and rosemary. (If salsa is refrigerated, let it set out about 30 minutes to come to room temperature before serving.)

Sprinkle steaks with Montreal seasoning. Grill over high heat 4-5 minutes. Turn and grill until desired doneness, about 4-5 more minutes for medium rare. Let rest covered with foil for 5 minutes and then slice against the grain. Top steak slices with the tomato salsa and serve immediately.