

The California Tomato Guide

For culinary professionals

RIPENING GUIDE

GREEN - STAGE 1

The surface is completely green and may vary from light to dark.

BREAKERS - STAGE 2

There is a *break* in color from green to tannish-yellow, pink or red on not more than 10% of the surface.

TURNING - STAGE 3

Between 10% - 30% of the surface shows a change in color from green to tannish-yellow, pink, red, or a combination thereof.

PINK - STAGE 4

Between 30% - 60% of the surface, in the aggregate, shows pink or red color.

LIGHT RED - STAGE 5

More than 60% of the surface, in the aggregate, is pinkish-red or red, and not more than 90% of the surface is red.

RED - STAGE 6

More than 90% of the surface, in the aggregate, is red.

FLAVOR

The key to better flavor is the right temperature.

Tomatoes stored at ideal temperatures should have a shelf life of about one week. If you are *forced* to store tomatoes in a cooler due to infrequent supplier deliveries or limited kitchen/preparation space, store them in close proximity to the cooler door, preferably draped with a thermal blanket.



COLOR/RIPENESS

Manage rotation and storage for optimal ripeness.

Order tomatoes at a color stage (ripeness level) based on your anticipated requirements. Take advantage of every delivery cycle available to keep product fresh. Where deliveries are limited or your requirements are low, consider ordering split packs of tomatoes at two different levels of ripeness. A day or two at room temperature in dry storage should bring on additional color and ripeness to lighter colored tomatoes.



FOOD SAFETY

The safety of your guests is absolutely paramount! Make sure your entire supplier network can help you trace-back.

Are you prepared for a food-borne illness, tampering or recall? California Tomatoes meet strict HACCP standards for food safety, and each grower maintains complete records on every tomato grown, packed and shipped. To protect you and your customers, ensure that your food service distributor, wholesaler and/or repacker also follows strict protocols for food safety and traceability.



www.tomato.org