



GUIDE TO RIPENING STAGES

Bulk or Hand-Packed

Hand-packed tomatoes are specified by numerical terms that indicate the number of rows and count per row (a 5x6, for example, has five rows of six tomatoes in each layer). These designations apply to “Lugs” and “Flats” as noted below.

Standard Designations

Numerical Term	Tomatoes per Container	Layers per Container
3 x 4	24	2
4 x 4	32	2
4 x 5	40	2
5 x 5	50	2
5 x 6	60	2
6 x 6	108	3
6 x 7	126	3
7 x 7	147	3

Typical Slicing Yield

(per tomato @ 1/4" thickness)

- Medium (6 x 7) tomatoes: **5 or 6**
- Large (6 x 6) tomatoes: **6 or 7**
- XLarge (5 x 6) tomatoes: **7 or 8**



Green / Stage 1

“Green” means that the surface of the tomato is completely green in color. The shade of green may vary from light to dark.



Breakers / Stage 2

“Breakers” means there is a definite “break” in color from green to tannish-yellow, pink or red on not more than 10% of the surface.



Turning / Stage 3

“Turning” means that more than 10%, but not more than 30%, of the surface, in the aggregate, shows a definite change in color from green to tannish-yellow, pink, red, or a combination thereof.



Pink / Stage 4

“Pink” means that more than 30%, but not more than 60%, of the surface, in the aggregate, shows pink or red in color.



Light Red / Stage 5

“Light red” means that more than 60% of the surface, in the aggregate, shows pinkish-red or red, provided that not more than 90% of the surface is red.



Red / Stage 6

“Red” means that more than 90% of the surface, in the aggregate, is red.



PURCHASING GUIDE AND TIPS

California Tomato Sizes

Ace Tomatoes are marketed under U.S. Grading Standards.

U.S. Grading Standard Size Designations	Minimum and Maximum Diameter
Small, 7 x 7	2 ⁴ / ₃₂ " - 2 ⁹ / ₃₂ "
Medium, 6 x 7	2 ⁸ / ₃₂ " - 2 ¹⁷ / ₃₂ "
Large, 6 x 6	2 ¹⁶ / ₃₂ " - 2 ²⁵ / ₃₂ "
X-Large, 5 x 6	2 ²⁴ / ₃₂ " and larger

Storage and Handling

- Proper temperature is critical to tomato quality. The ideal storage temperature range is 55-65° F, with 85-95% relative humidity. Temperatures below 50° F retard color development and destroy tomato flavor and texture.
- If you must keep tomatoes in the cooler, wrap them in thermal blankets and store them near the door, to minimize chill damage.

Buying Tips

- When ordering, be sure to specify your size and color requirements.
- Consider ordering tomatoes with slightly less color than needed, to ensure longer shelf life. Tomatoes ripen quickly, and sometimes they ripen at different rates.
- Let your distributor or repacker know that your order must be handled at temperatures above 55° F.

Receiving Tips

- Upon arrival, check the pulp temperature of samples from several boxes to verify transport and storage temperatures, which should always be above 55° F.
- Remove any tomatoes that show signs of decay. Decay spreads and can destroy not just one tomato, but the entire box.
- Look for bright, shiny skins and firm flesh, regardless of degree of ripeness.

Serving Information

- Use red, ripe tomatoes first. They have the best flavor.
- Fully ripened tomatoes will be firm, but will give slightly to gentle palm pressure.
- To peel, submerge tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds, then plunge into cold water. Drain, then slip off skins.
- Do not seed tomatoes. Seeds contain significant nutritional benefits.



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