

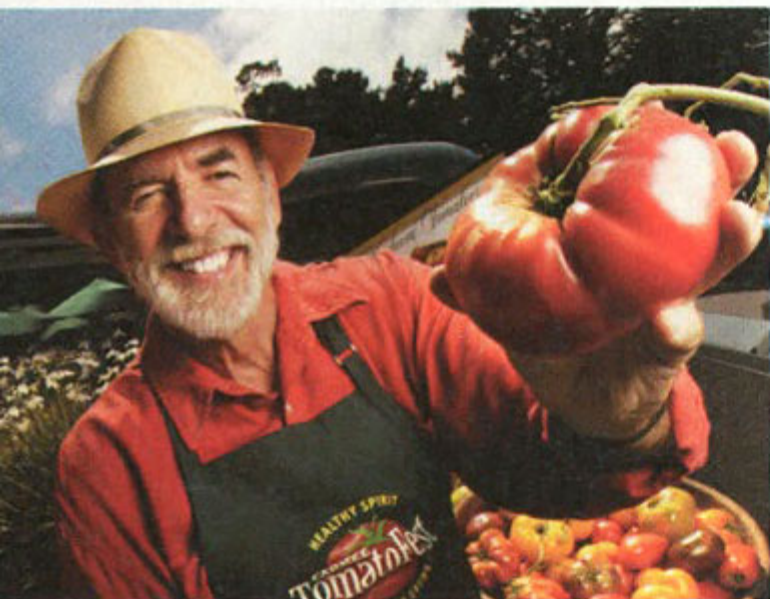
What a Chef Feeds His Family

“I’d never cook fresh pasta at home,” says celebrity chef Jamie Oliver. “I’d use dried pasta and make some quick tomato or meaty sauce. Add a bit of salad or a vegetable side dish and some fruit, and you have a meal in 15 minutes and a chance to hang around the table and catch up.”

M.O.



COURTESY YCMEDIA



Tastier Tomatoes

FOR THE PAST 75 YEARS, tomatoes have been bred for appearance and durability. But flavor is back, thanks in part to “Tomato Man” Gary Ibsen, founder of TomatoFest, a harvest festival in Carmel, California. He has preserved seedlings of 500 heirloom tomatoes. The meaty, juicy tomatoes were traditionally homegrown, and the seeds passed through generations like family recipes. Look for green, pink, orange, yellow and purple shades. “Their charm is their lack of uniformity,” says Ibsen. “Think beyond round and red. Buy them ripe and eat quickly.”

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Tomato Towers With Blue Cheese and Bacon

- 6 slices firm white sandwich bread
- 6 large heirloom tomatoes, assorted colors, if possible
- 6 slices bacon, chopped, sautéed, drained (reserve grease)
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 tbs. sherry vinegar
- 6 tbs. olive oil
- ½ cup blue cheese, crumbled

1. Using a cookie cutter, cut bread into rounds; toast on both sides. Slice tomatoes into ½-inch slices.
2. Warm bacon grease in skillet, adding half the salt and black pepper. Add vinegar; slowly whisk in oil. Remove from heat.
3. Build a tomato tower on each bread round, alternating 2-4 slices from different tomatoes; sprinkle each with salt, pepper and a dab of cheese.
4. Spoon warm dressing over tomato, top with cooked bacon and serve with rice or pasta as a main course.

Serves 6. M.O.

