

Preface AND Disclaimer

The History of the Humble Tomato

The tomato as we know it, can be traced back to about 700 A.D. to the Aztecs in the early days of the Americas. It wasn't until the 16th century that it found its way to Europe where initially only the wealthy were introduced to this fruit being a prized item brought back from the Americas by the early explorers returning from their constant journeying into the unknown world. They brought plants, fruits and vegetables along with treasures of metal, fabrics and the like. And because of the high prices, it seemed that only the wealthy were at first exposed to its culinary delights.

It is interesting to know that at that time much of the flatware was made of pewter and because of the acidity in the tomato, the lead from the pewter plates would leech into the food on the plate, which resulted in lead poisoning and of course, eventually death. The people of that era were not aware of the science behind it all, therefore our poor little tomato became an enemy to the people at first, however, at the same time for those that

could afford to buy from the returning merchants, the tomato fast became a favourite of the poorer people simply because they ate their food from wooden bowls, therefore there was no threat to their lives and of course the food was delicious and healthy for them.

It wasn't until the 1800's when the great migrations to American by many people throughout the world began taking with them their favourites plants and seeds to start producing in their new home across the sea. The Italians took their tomato plants with them, having been great fans of the fruit for many years prior to this world upheaval.

To add to the intrigue of our little tomato friend, the first pizza was invented in Naples, near the end of the 1880's to mark the occasion of the first visit from Queen Margarita, who was the first member of the Italian monarchy to visit their city since the conquering of Italy by Napoleon.

That very first pizza was originally designed with three basic colours in mind – each of those colours representing the colours of their new Italian flag.

- The Red was symbolised by the tomato.

- The White was symbolised by the mozzarella cheese.
- The green was symbolised by the basil topping.

That very first Pizza was aptly named Pizza Margarine - and that is when the tomato became so famous and so popular.

There has always been a discrepancy as to what the tomato actually is and should be recognised as in a classification listing.

At first the tomato was regarded as a fruit, as it fast became a symbol of the staple diet originating in the kitchens of the world just before the Civil War period in the USA.

Naturally, every country has its own history for this beautiful red fruit/vegetable, but because more than twelve million tons of tomatoes are produced every year, Americans claim the tomato to be their own.

The argument for fruit as against vegetable goes back to when in order to avoid taxes up until the late 1800's our tomato was classified as a fruit, however, the disputation was taken to the Supreme Court who

promptly decided against the fruit label and gave it instead the label of vegetable.

So, during its lifetime, the tomato has been thrust into three main classifications:

- Poisonous beautiful plant
- Tax-avoiding fruit
- Taxable vegetable

In our day, the humble tomato has not lost its popularity and is grown, eaten and enjoyed by many millions of people around the world.

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Any quotes from actual text on pages I wanted to include in my references are in the colour blue so that you can distinguish between my thoughts and the thoughts of others who actually provided me with the insight as to what I wanted to include in my own book.

Watch out for more from me in other areas.

As usual, my email address for your ideas for book titles, correspondence, criticisms or just some love from you is stories4debbie@gmail.com

Kindest regards
Debbie Nicholson
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