

Orange

History

Oranges originated in what is now Malaysia and over time, made their way from Asia to the Middle East, Africa, and ancient Greece and Rome. In ancient Greece, oranges were prized as food from the gods and were called “golden apples.” They were also a prized fruit of the Chinese emperors. In one Chinese dialect, the word for “orange” means “gold.” The spread of oranges was due in large part to traders and explorers. Oranges were popular among Europeans in the 6th and 7th centuries, but not for the fruit- which was quite bitter. The fragrant and beautiful trees were planted in the gardens of royalty. Fortunately, the Portuguese introduced the sweet oranges that we eat today to Europe in the 1450s.

Oranges first came to the Americas with Christopher Columbus. Oranges were planted, along with lemons and citrons, in Hispaniola. The Spanish also planted orange seeds in Florida in the 1560s. Today, Florida produces 70 percent of the country’s oranges, but 9 out of 10 Florida oranges are used to make juice. California oranges are the oranges that are typically eaten whole because they are sweeter than Florida oranges.

Fruit Science

As oranges ripen, the heat from the sun draws chlorophyll out of the orange’s skin. Chlorophyll is what makes leaves green. As the orange matures and gets more sunlight the fruit ripens and starts to change from orange to green.

Fun Facts

- Oranges are the primary source of vitamin C for most Americans.
- Oranges are technically berries.
- Oranges were given as presents in England during Queen Victoria’s reign.
- Oranges picked higher on a tree are sweeter than the ones picked closer to the ground.
- Oranges do not ripen after they are picked.
- Orange peels contain oils that are used for making soda and cosmetics.
- Orange trees have thorns.
- Oranges and orange blossoms were used to make perfumes in England and Italy.
- There are two main types of oranges- sweet and sour.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.