

World production of Tomato

Next to potato Tomato is the second most important vegetable crop in Pakistan. Present world production is about 100 million tonnes fresh fruit produced on 3.7 million hectares. Tomato production has been reported in 144 countries. The top seven leading fruit-producing countries are the United States, China, Turkey, Italy, Netherlands Belgium and India.

In the mid-16th century, the tomato was introduced into Europe, primarily featured in early herbals. It was grown for the beauty of its fruit, but was not often eaten, except in Italy and Spain. The fruit was thought to be poisonous like its relative, the deadly nightshade. Although native to the New World, the tomato was introduced back into America from Europe in the 18th century, although its importance as a vegetable has gained significance in this century. It is believed that the American Indians ate tomato fruit.

After introduction of the tomato into the United States, it was grown and brought to the table by Thomas Jefferson. George Washington Carver grew and recommended the tomato in an attempt to introduce the fruit into the diet among the poor in Alabama whose diets were woefully deficient in vitamins.

The designation of the tomato fruit as "Moor's apple" (Italian) or "love apple" (French) during the 16th century is unverified, but commonly believed. The color of the fruit first noted in Italy was yellow. By the 18th century, the tomato began to be used as an edible food, although it was still listed as being among the poisonous plants. ♦

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(FAO 2011 data)

