

TOMATOES

What is a tomato?

A tomato plant is an herbaceous plant, their stems do not lignify. It usually only grows for 1 or 2 years.

The branches are green, finely hairy and can grow up to 4 meters.

The plant produces red, yellow, green, dark or speckled fruits: the tomatoes.



Where does the tomato come from?

The tomato comes from **Central and South America**, where it was grown **2,000 years ago**. The first tomatoes were brought to **Europe** by the Spanish conquerors in the **16th century**.

The first description of the tomato was made by the Italians who described the tomato as a yellow fruit.

The Italian doctor and botanist Mattioli first mentioned the **Italian name for the tomato - pomi d'oro - golden apple in 1554**.

At that time, the tomato was kept as an ornamental plant in the gardens of the wealthy - it was rarely eaten. It was thought that the tomato was poisonous. It was not until the 18th century that tomatoes were also used in the kitchen.



What is the difference between fruits and vegetables?

Fruit is sweet - vegetables are sour / spicy? No, the tastes of fruit and vegetables are not so easy to distinguish.

Fruit ripen and vegetables don't? That does not fit all types of fruit and vegetables. Tomatoes do ripen, but apricots not.

Fruits are the fruits that emerge from the flower - vegetables are made from other parts of the plant.

That fits to quite a lot of plants - apples, pears, bananas, apricots or plums grow out of the flowers. While lettuce, carrots, celery or kohlrabi are made from different parts of the plant.

But what about tomatoes, pumpkins or courgettes that also grow from the flowers?

This brings us to the most common distinction between fruit and vegetables - the botanical distinction that relates to the lifespan of the plant.

Fruit grows on perennial plants - often on trees. Vegetables grow on one to two year old plants. After that, the vegetables grow always new out of a seed.

Fruit:
Plants continue to grow and form new fruits

Vegetables:
Plants die after 1-2 years - are consumed



The tomato is a cultivated plant, so it does not grow wild in Europe, but is always planted.

Today there are around **8,000 to 10,000** different types of tomato around the world.



So what is a tomato?

The tomato is a fruit that comes from a flower. Inside the tomato fruit we find seeds.

From a botanical point of view, the tomato is therefore a berry. But it does not grow on perennial woody trunks or branches. The tomato is a fruit vegetable and a berry.

