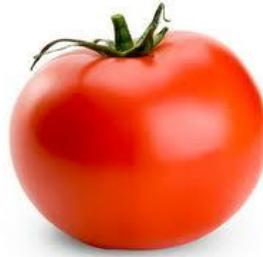


the story of the little red tennis ball



aka



**Welcome to our modern, corporate North American food system.
Little red tennis balls posing as tomatoes.**

Fresh tomatoes are bred to be tough(!) in order to withstand the bouncing of long range transport, and rendered still tougher by being picked green. Ripened "at time of selling" in special "ripening rooms" through artificial gassing with ethylene. Tough & Tasteless. Cheap & Cheerful. They look good on the shelf, but they've lost their taste & nutritional value in the process - diminished from our food supply & our own adaptive capacity. The "perfect standard" trade off.

Historically, tomatoes were amongst the best sources of Vitamin A (eyesight, reproductive health, growth) & Vitamin C (scurvy, stress, healing cuts & wounds). The increase in fat (lipids) & sodium has a domino effect; for example: high sodium intake is linked to diminished calcium intake in the human body.

Tomatoes, red-ripe-raw, year round average	
100gm of edible portion, or nutrients per pound	
2002 vs. 1963	% Change
Vitamin A	30.7% less
Vitamin C	16.9% less
Calcium	61.5% less
Phosphorus	11.1% less
Potassium	9% less
Niacin	7.97% less
Iron	10% less
Thiamin	1% less
Protein	22.7% less
Fat (lipids)	65% increase
Sodium	200% increase

a nutritional comparison

What the USDA Food Tables* tell us: a comparison between 2002 & 1963 shows us that 100mg of today's average red, ripe, whole tomato contains 22.7% less protein. It's understood that we do not buy tomatoes for their protein - we buy them for their vitamins (A, C), Potassium, Phosphorous, Iron, Calcium & Lycopene - a well-touted antioxidant; however, no comparative data exists on Lycopene.

* *USDA Food Tables Comparative Data: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Release 15 (2002) compared with USDA Agriculture Handbook No. 8: Composition of Foods (1963) by Thomas F. Pawlik, author "The End of Food: How the Food Industry is Destroying Our Food Supply - And What You Can Do About It" (2006).*

We've offered up blind trust. As a result, our food supply has been bombarded by the economics of big business and globalization.

Growers, processors & grocers do not concern themselves with the nutritional value of tomatoes.

Biodiversity is superseded.

Desired Characteristics of Tomato Varieties	
Fresh Tomato Market	Processing Tomato Market
1. yield (lbs per acre)	1. yield (lbs per acre)
2. large size (200-250 gms)	2. viscosity (thickness)
3. firmness (thick, hard pericarp wall/shipping)	3. soluble vs. insoluble solids
4. resistance to disease	4. firmness (mechanical harvesting)
5. heat tolerance*	5. uniform colour
6. uniform shape	6. disease resistant
7. uniform ripening time (colour)	7. heat/cold tolerance** (early/late crops)

* Florida produces 50% of North American fresh market tomatoes

** California produces 85% tomato processing crops

Baseline = 6,000 Varieties/Mass Market Production = 15 Varieties



0.0025% (1/4 of 1%)

26% (about 5) of processed varieties are also proprietary, developed by major multinational food processing companies

local food is a ray of hope

what we can do

- ✓ buy seasonal-varietal-organics from local farmers & Farmer's Markets
- ✓ grow non-hybridized (heirloom/heritage) fruit & vegetables
- ✓ enrol in a local CSA program (community supported agriculture)
- ✓ support urban farms, urban agriculture & sustainable food systems
- ✓ ask grocers to provide seasonal, locally-grown, organic & non-hybridized varieties
- ✓ support restaurants who participate in RSA (restaurant supported agriculture)
- ✓ choose seasonal & sustainable food items wherever & whenever possible



Heirloom tomatoes have distinct shapes & colours, the flavours are unique & the nutritional value is superior.

Heirloom tomatoes are non-hybridized, open-pollinated tomatoes: they have not been scientifically altered to look a certain way or to last a long time on a grocery store shelf.

- local food = more farmers**
- local food = a growth in gardening**
- local food = more farmer's markets**
- local food = local economies**
- local food = environmental benefits**
- local food = stronger, healthier communities**



The human interactions and relationships formed by a flourishing local food movement result in stronger, more engaged, and resilient communities.

(Jess, sustainablog)