

# SALMON NATION



## A TALE OF TWO TOMATOES



### Facts & Footnotes

#### Variety

**1. Approximately 97% of vegetable varieties grown in 1900 are now extinct.**

A study by the Rural Advancement Fund International (RAFI) compared the number of varieties of different commercial crops known to the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1903 to the number of varieties of these crops for which seeds existed in the National Seed Storage Laboratory (NSSL) in 1983. Considering about 75 different vegetables together, the RAFI study found that approximately 97% of the varieties on the 1903 lists are now extinct.

*Fowler, Cary & Mooney, Pat, (1990). Shattering: Food Politics and the Loss of Genetic Diversity. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ, USA. p.63.*

**2. There are hundreds of heirloom varieties to choose from.**

Seed Savers Exchange Members offer 2,702 Varieties of Tomatoes (non-hybrid) through Seed Savers Exchange's Yearbook.

[http://www.seedsavers.org/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=CTGY&Store\\_Code=2000&Category\\_Code=tomato](http://www.seedsavers.org/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=2000&Category_Code=tomato)

The website [www.heirloomtomatoes.net](http://www.heirloomtomatoes.net) lists 271 available varieties of heirloom tomatoes

#### Flavor

**1. Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually sold within 24 hours of being harvested.**

Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually sold within 24 hours of being harvested. Produce picked and eaten at the height of ripeness has exceptional flavor and, when handled properly, is packed with nutrients.

*FoodRoutes Network (<http://www.foodroutes.org/whycare2.jsp>)*

**2. A fully ripened tomato has more natural sugars**

“Field tomatoes generally have a higher brix, or sweetness, than greenhouse grown tomatoes. Brix can be altering the irrigation schedule [sic]. When plants are stressed, the brix actually rises. Flavor can also be influenced by variety, growing conditions, and the temperature that the tomatoes are held at.”

*“Greenhouse, Hothouse, Field, VineRipe; Understanding the Difference in Fresh Tomatoes. A Briefing for the Media.” The California Tomato Commission (webpage: [www.tomato.org/news](http://www.tomato.org/news))*

### **3. Traveling tomatoes are picked green and then gassed with ethylene prior to shipping.**

Mature-green tomatoes are normally treated with 100 to 150 ppm of ethylene for 24 to 48 hours at 68 degrees to 77 degrees F (20 to 25 degrees C) before shipment to assure uniform ripening. Repacking may be required if color development is not uniform.

*Le Strange, Michelle; Schrader, Wayne L.; Hartz, Timothy K. (2000). Fresh Market Tomato Production in California. University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Regents of the University of California. (webpage) [www.anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu](http://www.anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu).*

## **Food Miles**

### **1. From field to fork, an average dinner travels 1500 miles.**

In 1998, the Truck Weighted Average Source Distance for the continental United States was 1,518 miles. A food mile is the distance food travels from where it is grown or raised to where it is ultimately purchased by the consumer or end-user. A Weighted Average Source Distance (WASD) can be used to calculate a single distance figure that combines information on the distances from producers to consumers and amount of food product transported.

*Pirog, Rich. Food, Fuel, and Freeways: An Iowa perspective on how far food travels, fuel usage, and greenhouse gas emissions. Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Ames, Iowa. June 2001*

### **2. Lucy is picked and delivered to market within a day or two.**

Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually sold within 24 hours of being harvested. Produce picked and eaten at the height of ripeness has exceptional flavor and, when handled properly, is packed with nutrients.

*FoodRoutes Network <http://www.foodroutes.org/whycare2.jsp>*

### **3. It can take Tom up to two weeks to reach your market. During his journey he's been picked green, waxed, boxed, and gassed.**

Fruits and vegetables shipped from distant states and countries can spend as many as seven to fourteen days in transit before they arrive in the supermarket.

*Mary S. Choate. No date given. "A Good Tomato in Winter, Where?" Co-op Food Stores Web site. url: [http://www.coopfoodstore.com/news/Archives/arch\\_nutatt/seasonal/tomatoes.html](http://www.coopfoodstore.com/news/Archives/arch_nutatt/seasonal/tomatoes.html).*

California produces nearly 30 percent of the nation's supply of fresh-market tomatoes and ranks second behind Florida in total production. Mexico is the third largest supplier of tomatoes to the United States. While Florida and California mainly produce mature-green tomatoes, the role of vine-ripened tomatoes has been increasing. The majority of tomatoes imported from Mexico are extended shelf-life (ESL) vine-ripened tomatoes.

*Le Strange, Michelle; Schrader, Wayne L.; Hartz, Timothy K. (2000). Fresh Market Tomato Production in California. University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Regents of the University of California. (webpage)*

## **Dollars & Cents**

### **1. Since 1935, the U.S. has lost 4.7 million farms**

*USDA. 2002. "Number of farms, land in farms, and value of farm real estate, 1910-2002." Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/farmincome/finfidmu.htm>.*

## **2. More than 90¢ of every dollar you spend goes to the farmer when you buy local**

Like CSAs, farmers' markets provide farmers with close to 100 percent of the food dollar (minus a fee or small percentage paid to the market for maintenance) and a direct connection between farmer and consumer." In the words of the peach grower and writer David Mas Masumoto, farmers' markets are 'one of the saviors of the family farm. All those barriers created by the conventional marketing system are torn down. The consumer sees it isn't just a commodity – it's a peach, or a carrot, or a cabbage.'

*Spector, Rebecca. "Fully Integrating Food Systems: Regaining Connections between Farmers and Consumers" Edited by Kimbrell, Andrew. (2002) Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture. Foundation for Deep Ecology. P. 353*

## **3. These farmers earn only 20 cents of your dollar; the other 80 cents goes to pay for marketing, distribution, and other costs.**

In 1967, fruit farmers earned 31% of retail expenditures. In 1997, they earned only 18%. The fall for fresh vegetables is from 32% to 21%. These changes are accounted for by the increasing share of food expenditures spent on processing, marketing, and corporate profits, and most importantly by the concentration of power in food retailing which enables corporate buyers to drive down farm prices.

[Elitzak 1997]

*Starr, Amory; Card, Adrian; Benepe, Carolyn; Auld, Garry; Lamm, Dennis; Smith, Ken; Wilken, Karen. Barriers and Opportunities to Local Agricultural Purchasing by Restaurants and Institutional Food Buyers. Colorado State University, Department of Sociology. April, 2002.*