



## Tall Tales of Tomatoes Some of Them Actually True.MP3

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:00] And now it's quiz time.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:03] Guess what food are we talking about here are the clues. First.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:00:07] Tomatoes!

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:09] Laura! You just leak the answer you didn't wait for the clever clues you just blurt. Oh. That was Laura Popielski. We're out here at the Agriculture Department's Farmers Market in the VegUcation tent here and Laura is telling everybody about? Laura, this is where you are supposed to say it. OK. About?

**Laura Popielski:** [00:00:25] Tomatoes!

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:26] Yes. Which have a wild history and have been controversial from the very beginning. Coming up on this edition of Agriculture U.S.A.

**Voiceover:** [00:00:33] We're investigating those tomatoes.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:00:36] Tomatoes!

**Music:** [00:00:38] You like tomato and I like tomato.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:40] Let's not get into that let's just get on with agriculture USA. I'm Gary Crawford.

**Music:** [00:00:44] Let's call the whole thing off.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:00:48] First semester let's consider Thomas Jefferson who really gets only one good song in that musical "Hamilton".

**Laura Popielski:** [00:00:55] He grew tomatoes. Jefferson was actually quite a trailblazer because at that point people were kind of afraid of tomatoes.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:01:03] Tomatoes had a rather. Grim reputation first botanically.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:01:08] Tomatoes are in the nightshade family.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:01:10] And that usually preceded by the word deadly.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:01:13] Yeah you're right. If you're eating the stems and the leaves that has the poisonous alkaloid in it but that poison is really only poisonous to insects. It's a defense mechanism for the plant. But it's not going to hurt you.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:01:25] But try telling that to people in Europe in the 1600s now explorers brought back tomatoes from their place of origin in South America but they were too expensive for all but aristocrats to eat. But then many of those aristocrats started dying and tomatoes were blamed.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:01:42] So yes exactly but tomatoes were falsely abused it turns out that in the 15 and 1600s in Europe many rich people ate off pewter plates which had a lot of lead in them the acid in the tomatoes caused leaching out of the lead into the food and was lead poisoning that did

the killing. Nevertheless even into the 1800s in America.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:01] Some people still would not eat tomatoes but that has certainly changed.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:02:04] And they are the number 2 most eaten vegetable in the U.S. right behind the potato.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:08] The average American eating 77 pounds of tomatoes a year. One reason for tomatoes popularity flavor of course. But Laura you also say they're packed with nutrients vitamins lycopene which is powerful antioxidant but enough of science.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:25] Let us hear wise words from our tomato guru. The immaculate Laura Popielski.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:02:31] Knowledge is knowing tomato is a fruit wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:35] Yeah. Philosophy galore. I think so. Can you rewind the history that's proverb one more time.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:02:42] Knowledge is knowing tomato is a fruit wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:02:46] But aren't tomatoes actually vegetables. Let's go to a trusted reference source. The 1978 film classic "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes."

**Voiceover:** [00:02:55] This is man versus vegetable. Tomatoes are fruits.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:03:00] And Laura, which is it?

**Laura Popielski:** [00:03:01] Tomato is a fruit. Since it is a ripened ovary of a plant.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:03:04] Maybe. But let's go back to 1883. Congress passes a law putting a tax on imported vegetables but not on fruit. Now John Nix is a food importer. He sues the Port of New York and its tax guy Mr. Headon for all the tax he had paid over the years on all the tomatoes he had imported because as Laura pointed out.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:03:21] A tomato is a fruit.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:03:22] So the case goes all the way to the Supreme Court. And how did the 1893 case come out Laura?.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:03:29] The Supreme Court ruled that tomatoes are considered vegetables.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:03:36] Well the court ruled that technically tomatoes are fruits but for practical purposes are eaten as and treated as a vegetable and Laura on the treatment of tomatoes once we buy them get them home they should go in the fridge right?

**Laura Popielski:** [00:03:47] They! Should! Not! Go! In the fridge!

**Gary Crawford:** [00:03:50] Why! Should! They not! Go in the fridge?

**Laura Popielski:** [00:03:53] Because when they go in the fridge they won't taste as good and their texture gets not so enjoyable either. So tomatoes are best left on your countertop and they can stay on your countertop. About a week or so.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:04] As to some ways to prepare tomatoes millions of them of course. But Laura says Take your tomato and stuff it.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:09] Hollow out a larger tomato and fill it with your favorite kind of rice and bean mixture. Top it with cheese and bake it! Stuffed tomato.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:17] And then you just cook the whole thing?

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:19] Cook the whole thing.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:19] For tons more great ways to use tomatoes including throwing them at bad stage performers. Go online look for choose my plate dot gov choose my plate dot gov. We've got time for a tomato Djoko.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:32] Here's a good one.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:33] OK.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:33] Why did the tomato blush? Because he saw the salad dressing. Ooooh.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:38] Might have been better if it was. He saw the undressed salad.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:42] But I got more I got more.

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:43] No time, no time. From the USDA's Farmers Market in Wash...

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:47] What do you do with lazy tomatoes?

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:48] In Washington D.C.

**Laura Popielski:** [00:04:50] You can'em!

**Gary Crawford:** [00:04:50] Their going to can you I think. This edition of Agriculture USA mercifully is over. This is Gary Crawford reporting to the USDA Department of Agriculture in Washington.