



vegu-august-17-getting-in-touch-with-your-inner-tomato.MP3

Gary Crawford: [00:00:00] Once again we're coming to you from the Agriculture Department's Farmers Market in Washington D.C. We're in the Veg-U-cation Tent talking about.

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:07] Tomatoes!

Gary Crawford: [00:00:08] Yeah one of our two USDA Veg-U-cators today Toiayna Thompson. Now this has happened to me quite a lot. I go into the store, I grab some.

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:15] Tomatoes!

Gary Crawford: [00:00:16] Yeah, in a bit of a hurry and end up with some.

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:18] Tomatoes.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:19] That are too ripe, not even close to being ripe, either one. And end up throwing some of them out. And I see your face scrunching up there Toiayna that really rankles you, doesn't it?

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:28] I don't want any of my money to go to waste, and any of the fresh produce to go to waste.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:32] So you say I should take my time, look for tomatoes that are what?

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:36] Bright, shiny, with a firm skin, and kind of stay away from the ones that are a little dull in color. Not as red, and have a wrinkle.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:46] Yeah. Don't buy tomatoes that look like my face. Yeah you would really want to avoid that right?

Toiayna Thompson: [00:00:51] Yeah, I think so.

Gary Crawford: [00:00:53] Okay now with Toiayna today another Veg-U-cator Laura Walter!

Laura Walter: [00:00:57] I'm feeling good from my head tomatoes.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:02] Yeah well, we go on as if nothing had happened. You also are well versed on the tomato.

Laura Walter: [00:01:06] It's the second most consumed vegetable after potatoes.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:11] Laura, you said vegetable would you like to change your testimony?

Laura Walter: [00:01:14] Botanically they are a fruit.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:16] 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. Hedden for all the tax he had paid over the years on all the tomatoes he had imported, because as Laura pointed out-

Laura Walter: [00:01:33] Botanically they are a fruit.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:35] So the case goes all the way to the Supreme Court. And how did that 1893 case come out Laura?

Laura Walter: [00:01:41] They're actually vegetables.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:44] What?!

[00:01:46] Voiceover.

Gary Crawford: [00:01:47] Well whatever they are we do consume a lot of them. Last year, each American consumed ninety-three and a half pounds of tomatoes both fresh and processed. That consumption might have been more but tomatoes got a slow start in this country. People were scared to eat them. Laura, you've got a personal story about that.

Laura Walter: [00:02:02] I had a great uncle who refused to eat tomatoes because he thought they were poisonous. Because they're part of the nightshade family which also includes other poisonous plants that they were lumped in with all of that.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:14] Of course today they're lumped into all kinds of foods and dishes. Laura you're slicing up some tomatoes there, getting ready to make something to get out to people today. What's it going to be?

Laura Walter: [00:02:22] A Spanish tomato salad.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:24] Spanish?

Laura Walter: [00:02:24] Very simple. With our lovely slicing tomatoes, some basil, some garlic, oil and a little salt and pepper, but we're adding a twist. We're throwing in some beautiful toasted white bread to make a panzanella.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:39] Panzanella?

Laura Walter: [00:02:41] So "pane" is bread and so panzanella is a salad that includes bread.

Gary Crawford: [00:02:46] Wow. For more great tomato ideas go online to What's Cooking USDA and type in tomatoes. Thanks to Toiayna and Laura there. This is Gary Crawford reporting for the U.S. Department of tomato Agriculture in Washington.