



# Orange



## History

Oranges originated in what is now Malaysia and, over time, made their way from Asia to the Middle East, Africa, ancient Greece and Rome. In ancient Greece oranges were prized as food from the gods and were called golden apples. They were also a prized fruit of the Chinese emperors. In one Chinese dialect the word for orange means gold.

The spread of oranges was due in large part because traders and explorers carried them on their sea voyages to ward off “scurvy”—a deadly disease caused by a lack of vitamin C in the diet. Oranges were first brought to the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1493.



**Which came first—the fruit or the color?** All evidence points to the fruit being named the “orange” before the color. The word orange appears in the English language as early as the 13th century referring to the fruit; the earliest reference to orange as a color is found in the 16th century!

**Fruit Science**—As oranges ripen, the heat from the sun draws chlorophyll out of the orange’s skin, turning it from orange to green! An orange with some green on its skin is more ripe and delicious.



## Fun Facts

- Oranges are the largest citrus crop in the world. In the United States, oranges are the fourth most popular fruit while orange juice is the most popular juice.
- Oranges are the primary source of vitamin C for most Americans.
- Brazil produces the largest amount of oranges in the world.
- Oranges are technically berries.
- After chocolate and vanilla, orange is the world’s favorite flavor.
- Oranges were given as presents in England during Queen Victoria’s reign.
- Oranges do not ripen after they are picked.
- Orange peel contains oils that are used for making soda and cosmetics.
- Navel oranges were given that name because of the belly-button formation opposite the stem end—the bigger the navel in an orange, the sweeter it will be.