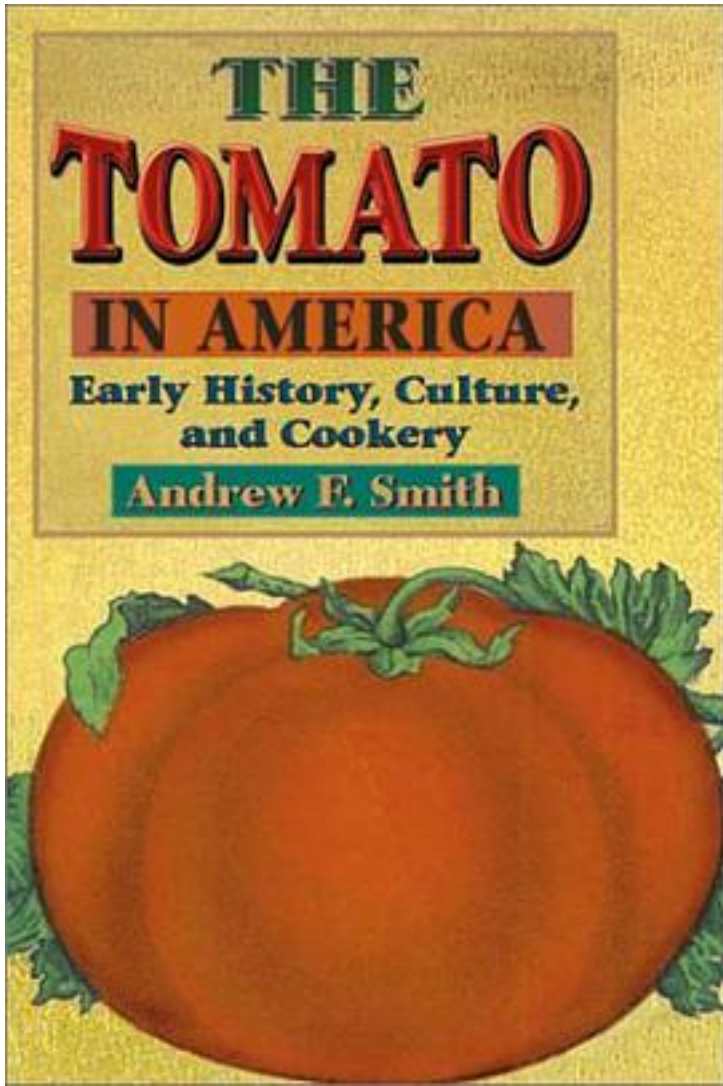


The Tomato in America



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From the Americas to Australasia, from northern Europe to southern Africa, the tomato tickles the world's taste buds. Americans alone devour more than twelve million tons annually of this peculiar fruit, variously considered poisonous, curative, and aphrodisiacal. In this first concerted study of the tomato in America, Andrew F. Smith separates myth from historical fact, beginning with the Salem, New Jersey, man who, in 1820, allegedly attracted spectators from hundreds of miles to watch him eat a tomato on the courthouse steps (the legend says they expected to see him die a painful death). Later, hucksters such as Dr. John Cook Bennett and the Amazing Archibald Miles peddled the tomato's purported medicinal benefits. The competition was so fierce that the Tomato Pill War broke out in 1838. "The Tomato in America" traces the early cultivation of the tomato, its infiltration of American cooking practices, the early manufacture of preserved tomatoes and ketchup (soon hailed as "the national condiment of the United States"), and the "great tomato mania" of the 1820s and 1830s. The book also includes tomato recipes from the pre-Civil War period, covering everything from sauces, soups, and main dishes to desserts and sweets. Now available for the first time in paperback, "The Tomato in America" provides a piquant and entertaining look at a versatile and storied figure in culinary history.

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目录:

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