



Florida's  
iconic fruit,  
the orange, has a

past that gives new meaning to the word “juicy.” We’ve attempted to slice through the many theories of how and where the orange originated. Along the way, we turned up several pulpy facts about one of the world’s most beloved foods.

It was about eight thousand years ago, in the geographic region stretching from Iraq to India, that the world’s original citrus fruit was born. The citron was adored by Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Romans, and Persians and was raised for its aroma as well as for purposes ranging from embalming to creating aphrodisiacs to protecting against poisons.

A popular Jewish symbol in ancient times, the citron appeared on graves, coins, and synagogues.

It was the Jews, in fact, who planted the citron across the Roman Empire’s Mediterranean region (Spain, Italy, Sicily, northern Africa, and Turkey). One theory holds that the

Romans eventually commissioned Jewish gardeners to use citron as grafting stock to develop a sweeter fruit, leading to

the creation of the orange. Do a little research, however, and you’ll

discover that Southeast Asia, India, and southern China

are also credited as the birthplace of the

orange.

