

Podcast 110 - The Granny Smith Apple

by Rob McCormack - Thursday, March 28, 2019

<https://slowenglish.info/?p=2872>

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 110 – The Granny Smith Apple

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast110.mp3>

Hi,

One of the things I enjoy in Australia is the ready availability of fresh fruit. In particular, I love the taste of a fresh apple. Apples were always a part of my diet when I was growing up. Even to this day, one of my favourite snacks is a fresh apple taken from the crisper in the bottom of our refrigerator. The first bite of a crisp, ripe apple is always a delight. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about a very popular and famous apple which was first cultivated and grown in Australia – the Granny Smith apple.

The Granny Smith apple is bright green in colour, even when it is fully ripe. The skin is quite thick compared to other apples and it takes a good strong bite to begin eating a Granny Smith apple. The flesh is quite sweet as you would expect in an apple, but it also has a slightly tart taste. By tart, I mean that it also has a slight sharpness to it. Sometimes it can make your eyes water a little, like your taste buds are overloaded with the sharpness of the flavour. But that sharpness also means the apple is very refreshing to eat. Granny Smith apples are definitely one of my favourites.



The Granny Smith apple was first grown in Australia in 1868 by an orchardist named Marie Ann Smith. With her husband Thomas, she owned a small orchard on the outskirts of Sydney in New South Wales. She had eight children and, in her later years, became known as 'Granny Smith'. It is believed that she was experimenting with a type of apple called crab apples for use in cooking and had thrown away the apple cores near a creek. An apple tree had subsequently grown there which produced a different type of apple with a green skin. When she tried out these apples, she found them to be good for eating and also very good for cooking. She also found that these apples seemed to store well. In other words, it took a long time before they went bad. This was an excellent feature for any apple in the late 1800s, when

refrigerators were not available. Mrs Smith began growing these green apples and selling them in the local market. They soon became popular. Other orchardists started to grow this new apple too. In 1890, the Granny Smith was being exhibited at the local agricultural show by many growers and, in 1895, the apple came to the attention of the New South Wales government's Agriculture Department, which started growing the Granny Smith apple and recommending it as a suitable fruit for export. As a result, its popularity grew and it started to be exported overseas. That was the beginning of the Granny Smith apple success story. Much later, by 1975, 40% of all apple exports from Australia were Granny Smiths. It is interesting to note that The Beatles, the great British pop group, used a picture of the Granny Smith apple as the symbol for their record company Apple Records, when they created it in 1968. A picture of the Granny Smith apple was shown on each side of the vinyl records which were produced.

One of the really important characteristics of the Granny Smith is its suitability for cooking. This is because the flesh of the Granny Smith apple holds its shape well when cooked. In other words, it doesn't go too soft or mushy. For example, when eating an apple pie, it is more pleasant to eat if you can see and bite into firm pieces of cooked apple. My wife is from Austria and the Austrians have a tradition of cooking a dessert called apple strudel, a delicious dessert dish made with pastry, oil, breadcrumbs, sugar, sultanas and apples. My wife always chooses Granny Smith apples when she makes her homemade strudel. Believe me, it is absolutely delicious. I always go back for seconds.

Granny Smith apples are harvested around March and April each year in Australia. Then they are put into cold storage, which are large sheds that work like huge refrigerators, where the apples can be kept cold at around 1 degree Celsius for up to a year. Even after a year in cold storage, Granny Smith apples (and other varieties too) will still be crisp and suitable for eating. That's why we can buy apples, including Granny Smiths, all year round. It is also why I put apples straight into my fridge when I get them home from the supermarket. That way, they will last longer and the last one that we eat will taste just as crisp and fresh as the first one that we eat.

<https://youtu.be/B702UbvAauQ>

Of course, there are many varieties of apples that you can buy in the supermarkets in Australia. The top five varieties are Granny Smith, Red Delicious, Cripps Pink, Fuji and Gala. Of all these, I think the Granny Smith is the most versatile. You can eat it fresh or use it to make a pie or strudel. To celebrate the famous Granny Smith apple, the Sydney suburb of Eastwood has a Granny Smith Festival every year in October. Eastwood is the place where Marie Ann Smith lived and grew that first green apple. I reckon she would smile if she could see how famous her green apple has become.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7aLYumeYRY>

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 112]

Vocabulary

agricultural show = an event where farmers show their produce – see Podcast 78

<https://slowenglish.info/?p=2085>

Agriculture Department = a special group in the government which looks after farming

all year round = at all months of the year

apple cores = the middle part of the apple, where the seeds are found

availability = when something is easy to get

bite = to use your teeth to eat food

came to the attention of = when a person or group sees something for the first time

celebrate = to join with others and be happy about something

characteristics = features, things which you see on all types of something

compared = when you decide if something is better or worse than something else

creek = a small river

crisp = (here) when something is brittle and can be easily broken

crisper = the lowest shelf or drawer in your refrigerator, where you keep fruit and vegetables

cultivated = to grow plants

definitely = certainly

delicious = tastes very, very good

delight = joy, happy feeling

diet = what people eat

excellent = when something is very, very good

exhibited = shown to others

experimenting = trying something that you have not done before, to see if it is good

export = to send overseas to other countries

feature = a characteristic

harvested = when a crop is picked, when it is taken off the plant

mushy = soft, but usually referring to something that is wet

orchard = a large field where fruit is grown

orchardist = a person who grows fruit in a large field

outskirts = on the edge

overloaded = when something is too heavy or too full

overseas = other countries outside Australia

recommending = when an expert tells you something, gives advice

refreshing = when a food or drink makes you feel better

refrigerator = like a box which is cold inside. It keeps food cold

reckon = think (usually used in speaking, not in writing)

ripe = when fruit is ready to eat

seconds = (here) when you have two servings of a food or drink

shape = the outline of something, around its edges

sharpness = (here) when something feels sharp, when something has a strong taste

sheds = a large building used to store things

slightly = a small amount

snacks = something small that you eat between the main meals of the day

soft = can be easily pressed in, opposite of hard

storage = the place where you keep something for use later

store = to put something away so you can have it later

subsequently = after, following

suitability = when something can be easily used in a certain way

taste buds = the part of your tongue which can taste food

varieties = types

versatile = when something can be used for 2 or more purposes

vinyl records = how music was sold, on large circular black discs

water = (here) when your eyes have tears in them, caused by a strong taste in your mouth

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