

Fake coeur de boeuf tomatoes in France

Coeur de boeuf tomatoes have everything going for them from their size to their bright colour and promise of a juicy, sweet flavour. However consumers are disappointed after the first bite : the tomatoes have no taste.

Coeur de boeuf tomatoes were launched on the market following a trend for heritage vegetables. Following the success of vine and cherry tomatoes with their distinct flavours, the coeur de boeuf is meant to have a local, earthy flavour. Vincent Lestani, Director of a group of organic producers in the South-West says that they “started to send it to Paris in the 2000s.”

Whilst trying to make these heritage vegetables into a best seller today, the consumer is often cheated as in the vast majority of cases, the only thing linking this often overpriced tomato to a coeur de boeuf is it's name. These tomatoes are in fact hybrids, created through crossing many industrial varieties with strong productivity with the real coeur de boeuf, which ends up completely unauthentic. This situation has arisen because coeur de boeuf tomatoes do not have an identification sheet with the GEVES (Group of studies and control of varieties). The name coeur de boeuf is therefore vague and easily tainted by these hybrids.

Real coeur de boeuf tomatoes come from Italy, where the name Cuore di Bue evokes their characteristic heart shape. These tomatoes are heavy, easily reaching over 200g, slightly ribbed and extremely tasty and crunchy. So these are far from the shiny skinned tomatoes with bottoms wider than the tops that are being sold in supermarkets. It is hard to find real coeur de boeuf tomatoes, but it is advised to look in the market or even grow your own!

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