

Headline: Orange juice exists due to climate change that occurred millions of years ago

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Before orange juice became the staple breakfast drink that it is today, it used to only just exist in the confines of southwestern China in Asia.

Citrus trees migrated from the Himalayas to the rest of the world, according to a report by The Verge last Thursday, after changes in climate occurred six to eight million years ago.

Citrus trees are considered to be the most widely cultivated trees in the planet, but as per a study published by Nature just this month, the citrus trees of today derive from no less than 10 ancestral species that originated from the foot of the Himalayan mountains.

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"When you look at the diversity of citrus that you see in your neighbourhood grocery, that is the result of thousands of years of human breeding, superimposed on millions of years of natural diversification," University of Berkeley geneticist Daniel Rokhsar told The Verge. "It's both a combination of human ingenuity and also natural diversity, and we need them both."

The cross-breeding of at least 10 ancestral citrus species is what gave way to the manifold types of citrus fruits we have available today, from the small and sour mandarins and wild pomelos, to the distinct oblate satsuma and the vivid pink grapefruit.

So next time you drink orange juice, perhaps you'll remember that a glass of orange juice is not just a glass of orange juice, but is, in actuality, the product of ancient seeds whose fate went against the odds of migration and climate change that occurred millions of years ago, beginning in the depths of the ancient Himalayas, germinating and sprouting before finally being transplanted to grow into the orange trees that we know today.

Or, perhaps, it is just plain orange juice. Either way, it makes for a good conversation piece. JB

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