

# FLORIDA versus CALIFORNIA ORANGES®

by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, FL – August 11, 2019

*A member of a golf group that I have been involved with is a truck driver. He makes very frequent trips from the Orlando, Florida area to locations in California; interestingly, he sometimes hauls loads of Florida oranges to California and then brings California oranges back to Florida on his return trip! Considering the availability of locally-grown oranges in Florida, the reason for trucking these oranges back and forth has been a mystery to me for some time; so, I have finally done some exploring for some general information about oranges and the reasons for these cross-country shipments and now want to share a few of my findings with you in this article.*

The top country producers of oranges in the world are: Brazil, China, India, USA, Mexico, Spain, and Egypt. Brazil out produces the others by a wide margin! The top orange-producing states in the USA are: Florida, California, Texas, Arizona, Louisiana, and Georgia. The top orange-producing area in Florida is Polk County, located just over 50 miles southwest of Orlando in central Florida. Actually, Florida produces more oranges than any other state in the USA; California holds second place for its annual production. So, in line with trying to resolve the mystery in my mind about: why does Florida need California-grown oranges and vice-versa, let's move on!

## FLORIDA ORANGES

Although some varieties of oranges grown in Florida are the same as those grown in California, their growth, contents, and appearance are based on the hot, rainy, and humid environmental conditions found in Florida. As a consequence, Florida oranges have thin and somewhat-blemished skins, but are considerably juicier than oranges grown elsewhere. As such, Florida-grown oranges lend themselves more readily to being made into juice rather than being eaten as a fruit. In fact, Florida ranks second in the world behind Brazil for the highest production of orange juice; and, it is important to note that approximately 90% of all orange juice produced in the USA is attributed to Florida-grown oranges.

## CALIFORNIA ORANGES

As stated above, the same varieties of oranges grown in Florida can also be grown in California. However, California's climate is quite arid and there is very little yearly rainfall. Given that most days are hot and sunny with nights that are dry and cool, this weather lends itself to raising oranges with thick and blemish-free skins. Such oranges are attractive to supermarket shoppers for readily-edible fruit! Of course, California oranges with their thicker skins also stay fresher for longer periods.

My mystery is now resolved and I hope what I have stated here is of interest to you too! Hey, wherever your oranges are from (and now from So. Africa too!), enjoy them to the fullest!

