

## A QUINCE, FOR YOU, MY LOVE

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The poor lost quince. Ask many people on the street today what a quince is and they will not be able to tell you. However, if you were to perform the same task during the middle ages, they would have thought you daft for asking!

The quince is a rich, golden colored fruit similar to apples and pears that was famous from ancient times and throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It is believed to originate in the Caucasus mountain region which included parts of Turkey and Persia. It was highly prized by the Ancient Greeks and Romans and is even seen immortalized in the mosaics left behind at the lost city of Pompeii. The Ancient Greeks developed a grafted version of the fruit that had an exceptional quality. Mention of the quince is seen as early as 600 BCE in Greek writings as a ritual item in wedding ceremonies.

Wedding Ceremonies? Yes! You see the Quince from Ancient Times through the Middle Ages was a symbol of Love and Fertility. These fruits were dedicated to the Goddess of Love. They were given as gifts to wish happiness and love for your friends and shared between lovers as a blessing on their relationship. Wedding ceremonies frequently included some type of ritual involving the quince. A couple could eat a quince together as part of the ceremony, the bride could be given a quince pastry as a blessing for fertility, or most comically the people of Athens would toss quinces at the married couple as they departed the ceremony. Ouch! And you thought rice was bad!

So the next time you're feeling a little amorous, why not toss a quince in your lover's direction?