

Bell Peppers

Bell peppers are the fruit of the capsicum annuum, a member of the nightshade family. Red bell peppers are simply green peppers that are left on the vine to ripen. Green peppers are slightly bitter, while the red, yellow, and orange are somewhat sweet. Unlike hot peppers, bell peppers do not contain capsaicin, which is what makes other peppers spicy. Peppers have been cultivated for nearly 9,000 years!

CULINARY TIPS

- Bell peppers, especially red ones, are an excellent source of vitamin C.
- Bell peppers can be eaten raw, roasted, sautéed, grilled, or pickled.
- Bell peppers peel easily if you char them over an open flame, or under a broiler! Place the charred and blistered peppers in a bowl, cover with foil or plastic, or put them in a paper bag. After a few minutes, the black, blistered peels will slip right off. Roasted, peeled, peppers are wonderful to use as topping on pizza, in sandwiches, marinated, or added to dips and spreads.

HOW TO STORE PEPPERS

Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer. Take care to make sure peppers are very dry, any moisture on the peppers will encourage spoiling. Peppers freeze well when cut into strips and placed in freezer bags. Just be sure to extract as much air as possible from bag (this can easily be done with a straw!).

3 WAYS TO PREPARE PEPPERS

- Raw! Peppers add a wonderful crunch and taste of freshness to salads, salsas, slaws, and more. They are very attractive and tasty served with hummus and spreads.
- Grill! Peppers are fantastic grilled. Simply rub with a bit of oil and cook on a hot grill for a minute or two. They pair nicely with most summer veggies...squash, corn, tomatoes, and eggplant!
- Sauté! Toss peppers into your stir-fry, or sauté them for an omelette or frittata.