Peppers

Volume 1, Issue 3

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What's So Great about Peppers?

Flavorful and Colorful
Peppers add color, flavor, and texture to salads, pizza, pasta and ethnic foods.

Rich in Vitamins and Minerals
Peppers are high in Vitamin C and are a source of beta carotene, potassium, folic acid, and fiber.

Sweet or Spicy
Peppers have a wide range of flavors, from very sweet to the spiciest food on earth.

Easy to Use
Peppers mix well with almost any type of food, such as, poultry, fish, rice, pasta, as well as other vegetables. Frozen peppers are pre-cut and available all year.

Versatile
Peppers are great to eat raw, stuffed, roasted, stewed, or pickled. Peppers can be a healthy side dish or snack.

Selecting and Storing Peppers

At the Market
Bell peppers are in stores all year, but are less expensive during the summer. Fresh peppers come in many colors (even purple), shapes, and sizes. Green bell peppers are usually the least expensive. When buying other colors of peppers, try to buy them on sale at your local market. When selecting peppers, follow the same guidelines.

Look for: Peppers with deep color, glossy skin, and firmness.

Avoid: Peppers with thin walls (flimsy sides); peppers that are wilted or with cuts or tears through the walls; and pepper with soft watery spots on the sides.

Storage
Store unwashed peppers in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Peppers will stay fresh for about a week. Green bell peppers will stay fresh a little longer than the yellow and red ones.

Funded by the PENNSYLVANIA NUTRITION EDUCATION TRACKS, a part of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To find out how the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program can help you buy healthy foods, contact the PA Department of Public Welfare's toll-free Helpline at 800-692-7462. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Varieties of Peppers

The variety of the pepper and the stage of ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. A red bell pepper is a mature green bell pepper. Bell pepper flavor becomes sweeter and milder with age.

Jalapeño and Serrano peppers are a spicy cousin to bell peppers. These varieties of peppers are smaller than bell peppers. But don't let the size fool you: these peppers have a lot of heat!

Did You Know?

Red bell peppers have 9 times more beta carotene (a cousin to Vitamin A) and twice the Vitamin C than green bell peppers! But don't forget a serving of green peppers still provide over 200% of the suggested amount of Vitamin C.

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size (149g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 40	Calories from Fat 5
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 20% • Vitamin C 220%	
Calcium 2% • Iron 4%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Green Pepper

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size (149g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 40	Calories from Fat 5
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 170% • Vitamin C 470%	
Calcium 2% • Iron 4%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Red Pepper

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size (149g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 40	Calories from Fat 5
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 9g	3%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 8% • Vitamin C 460%	
Calcium 2% • Iron 4%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Yellow Pepper

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Preparation Tips

Always wash fresh peppers gently in cold water to remove dirt.

Make a meal in minutes with a bag of frozen peppers.

Dice peppers for a colorful, crunchy addition to dips, pasta, or pizza.

When **freezing**, first core the peppers. Chop, dice or slice the peppers. Spread the pepper pieces in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Place tray in the freezer for an hour or longer. This pepper pieces will remain separated for easy measuring. Loosen pepper pieces from the tray and put into freezer bags. Place sealed bags in the freezer.

To **roast peppers**, cut a small slit near the stem of each pepper. If grilling, use a long-handled fork to hold the pepper. Turn the pepper over a flame until skin is blackened. If using an oven, broil peppers 4 inches away from heating source. After skin has blackened, place the hot peppers in a zip-lock bag for 15 minutes to allow them to steam. The steam helps to remove the skin. Take the pepper from bag and scrape the skin off using a table knife. Remove stem, core, and remove seed from pepper. Roasted peppers add rich flavor to any dish!

If cooking with the **spicy peppers** like Jalapeño, Chile, and Serrano peppers, make sure to wear rubber gloves and make sure you don't touch your eyes! The oils from these peppers can cause your skin and eyes to burn! To make spicy peppers less spicy, scrape out the seeds.

Fitting Peppers into MyPyramid

The green triangle of MyPyramid is the vegetable section. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, or canned. Age, gender, and level of physical activity determine the daily vegetable need. For a 2000 calorie diet, it is recommended having about 2 ½ cups of vegetables daily. For more information on vegetable serving sizes go to www.mypyramid.gov.

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Recipe Collection

Southwestern Pepper Cups

Makes 10 servings

Ingredients:

5 bell peppers
(any color), halved and seeded
1/3 cup onion, chopped
1 1/2 garlic clove, chopped
3 cups rice, cooked
10 1/2 ounces tomatoes with chilies,
canned, diced and undrained
8 1/2 ounces corn, canned, drained
vegetable cooking spray
1/3 cup shredded cheddar cheese

1. Place peppers in boiling water 2 to 3 minutes. Drain. Set aside.
2. Cook onion and garlic in oil in medium skillet over medium high heat for 3 minutes.
3. Combine rice, tomatoes with chilies, corn and onion mixture. Mix well.
4. Spoon mixture into pepper halves, place on baking sheet coated with cooking spray.
5. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 minutes or until hot. Sprinkle with cheese.
6. Bake again at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 to 10 minutes or until hot and cheese melts.

Nutrient Data

Serving size: ½ Pepper

Calories 110, Total Fat 1.5 g, Saturated Fat 1.0 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Sodium 210 mg, Carbohydrate 21 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 3 g, Vitamin A 8%, Calcium 4%, Vitamin C 80%, Iron 6%

Shell Pasta Salad with Veggies

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

10 ounces small shell pasta, cooked and chilled
1 green bell pepper
1 red bell pepper
1 cup cucumber
2 medium carrots
1 stalk celery
1 small red onion
5 radishes
1/4 cup low fat cottage cheese (optional)
1 seven-ounce can of tuna in water (optional)

1. In a large pot of water, cook pasta. Drain and rinse under cold water; chill.

2. Dice all vegetables and add to pasta. Add cottage cheese or tuna (optional). Mix with your favorite low fat dressing.

Nutrient Data

Serving size: 1 cup Salad

Calories 254, Total Fat 4.0 g, Saturated Fat 0.6 g, Cholesterol 1 mg, Sodium 26 mg, Carbohydrate 47 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 8 g, Vitamin A 757 RE, Calcium 27 mg, Vitamin C 40 mg, Iron 2.4 mg

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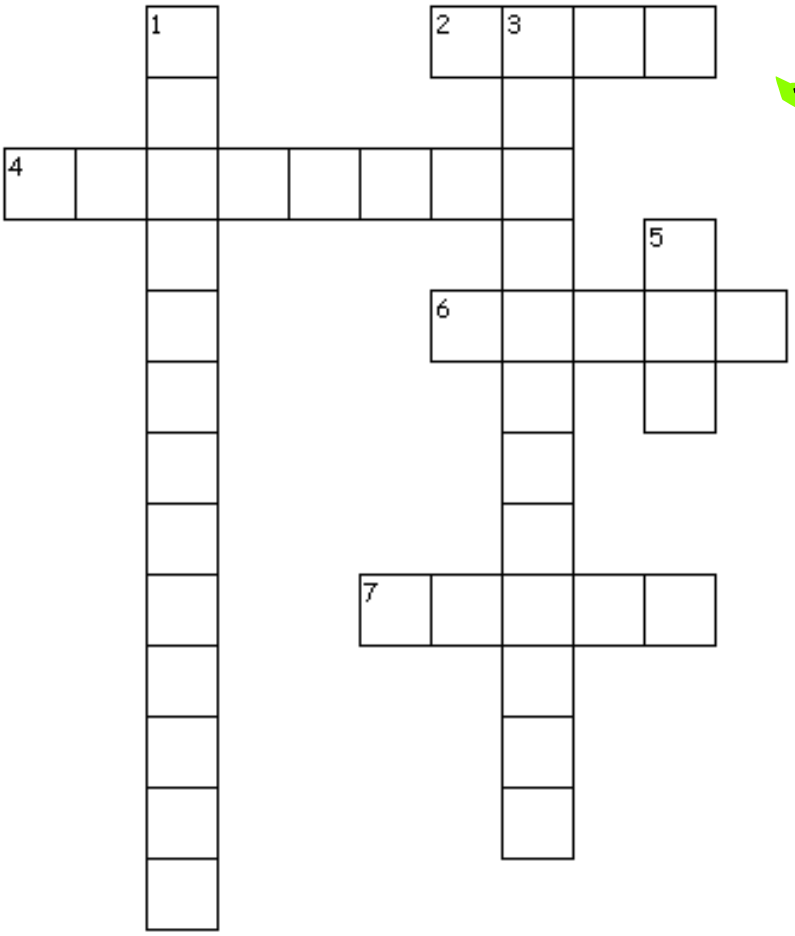
Activity Alley

Pepper Puzzle

Directions: Answer the clues to solve the crossword puzzle



Across

2. Peppers grow best in ____ weather
4. Peppers are one of the best sources of this vitamin
6. This kind of pepper stays fresh longest
7. If you _____ a pepper, it makes the skin turn black. But don't worry; you take the black skin off before eating the pepper!

Down

1. The cousin to Vitamin A
3. Another name for Vitamin C
5. This color of bell pepper has 9 times as much beta carotene than other types of bell peppers

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How Much Do You Know About Peppers?

Directions: Answer the questions to measure your pepper skills

1. Bell peppers are a excellent source of this nutrient
   a. Vitamin C
   b. Calcium
   c. Protein

2. The spiciest pepper is
   a. Jalapeno Pepper
   b. Pepperoncini Pepper
   c. Habanero Pepper

3. The season best to grow peppers is
   a. Spring
   b. Winter
   c. Fall

4. Peppers were first grown in
   a. Africa
   b. Central and South America
   c. India

5. Peppers turn this color when fully mature
   a. Black
   b. Red
   c. Green

6. Peppers should be stored
   a. On the countertop
   b. In a paper bag
   c. Unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator

7. To avoid burns from the pepper oil when using hot peppers, you should use
   a. Gloves
   b. Plastic spoon
   c. Paper towels

8. When purchasing peppers, look for
   a. Thin walls
   b. Glossy skin
   c. Watery spots

9. Usually, the least expensive pepper is the
   a. Habanero Pepper
   b. Red Bell Pepper
   c. Green Bell Pepper

10. You eat peppers
    a. Often
    b. Once in a while
    c. Never

Your Score

0-3 correct

Peppers are a great source of vitamins and minerals and low in calories. Peppers are easy to use. Peppers add great flavor to any dish. If you scored 0-3, try to include peppers in a dish this week. Top a pizza with peppers, or use a frozen bag of peppers to make a quick quesadilla.

4-6 correct

Good job! Peppers provide one of the highest sources of Vitamin C, and are low in fat. Peppers come in a variety of colors. Red bell peppers often are a greater source of nutrients. If you scored 4-6, try to include peppers in your dish tonight. Sauté peppers with onions and garlic for a side dish, or chop peppers and add them to a salad.

7-10 correct

Wonderful! Peppers are high in Vitamin C and are a source of beta carotene, potassium, folic acid, and fiber. Red bell peppers have 9 times more Vitamin A and 2 times more Vitamin C, than the green version. Whether you like sweet or spicy, peppers can fit into almost any dish. If you scored 7-10, try to make peppers a main dish. Stuffed peppers or a salad with peppers as the main ingredient will add color and flavor to your plate!

Correct Answers: a, c, a, b, b, c, a, b, a (1/2 point for b)

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