

Veggie of the Month

- *September* -

Peppers



About

Peppers come in a huge variety of shapes, sizes, colors and flavors. The word “pepper” usually refers to the genus *Capsicum*, which includes **hot** varieties, also known as chile peppers, and **sweet** varieties, such as the bell pepper. Because of this variety, peppers can be incorporated into almost any dish and are popular in many international cuisines, from Mexico to Thailand and India. Peppers originated in South America but are now grown internationally and in the United States. Because they’re low in calories and high in vitamins and minerals, peppers are a **nutritious addition** to a healthy lifestyle.

Did You Know?

Red bell peppers pack the most nutrition, because they’ve been on the vine the longest. Compared to green bell peppers, they have almost **11 times more beta-carotene** (helps you see!) and 1.5 times more vitamin C.

Chile peppers contain **capsaicin**, the chemical that gives them their heat. Capsaicin is used in topical pharmaceuticals to relieve muscle and joint pain.



Shopper's Tips



The smaller the hot pepper, the more heat it packs. Be careful to select the pepper with the appropriate heat level for you and your family. The habanero is among the hottest, while the jalapeño and Anaheim are more mild.

Wear gloves and be careful not to touch your face or eyes when cooking with hot peppers. The seeds are the hottest part and can be removed.

Try the more nutritious red or orange bell peppers over the green ones. They'll add more color to your salads and pasta dishes.

Nutrition Highlights

- All varieties are excellent sources of **vitamins A and C**, potassium, folic acid, and fiber
- The capsaicin in hot peppers has been shown to slightly suppress appetite and **boost metabolism** by raising body temperature, helping with weight loss over time

Try This!

- Blend roasted red peppers, walnuts, and balsamic vinaigrette with cumin and paprika for a smoky vegan dip and spread.
- Slice and sauté peppers to add color and flavor to stir fry, burritos, quinoa, and rice bowls, or eat raw in salads.
- Halve bell peppers, stuff with your favorite mixture and bake! Try cherry tomatoes, feta and thyme, or crack an egg over sweet potato hash and cheese for extra protein.
- Make a pot of tasty vegan chili with crumbled tofu, green hot peppers and other veggies.



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