

Pepper Basics

PURCHASING AND PREPARING PEPPERS



- Sweet peppers should be fresh-looking, firm, thick-fleshed and a bright green or red color, depending on the stage of maturity.
- Avoid peppers that are soft and dull-looking.
- At home, keep sweet peppers cool and humid and use them within a few days for maximum freshness.
- To prepare peppers to stuff or bake, cut off tops and remove seeds and membrane from inside. Cook peppers in a small amount of boiling water for 5 minutes, then drain, stuff and bake as your recipe directs.
- When working with hot peppers, always wear plastic gloves or coat hands with fat to avoid burns.

PEPPER TIDBITS



- For a spicy side dish, sauté sliced peppers with minced fresh garlic in olive oil.
- Cut fresh green or red sweet peppers in quarters, remove seeds and membrane, and stuff each quarter with seasoned cream cheese for a colorful hors d'oeuvre.
- Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped green pepper to 1 pound of ground beef for extra pep in hamburger or meatloaf.
- Sauté sliced peppers with fresh mushrooms and onions to top steak sandwiches, hamburgers and hot dogs, subs, or any favorite sandwich.
- Raw pepper rings are delicious on sandwiches.
- Wrap crisp pepper strips in plastic to preserve fresh taste and crisp texture and pack into lunch bags for a healthful and delicious snack.

- Chop fresh sweet peppers into tuna or egg salad for bright color and terrific taste.
- Stir-fry sweet peppers with beef or chicken for quick and easy cooking.

PICKLED PEPPERS (Hungarian, Banana, Other Varieties)

Makes about 8 pint jars

Wash 4 quarts long red, green or yellow peppers and drain. Cut 2 small slits in each pepper. Dissolve $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups salt in 1 gallon water. Pour over peppers and let stand 12 to 18 hours in refrigerator. Drain peppers, rinse again and drain thoroughly.

Combine 2 tablespoons horseradish, 2 cloves garlic, 10 cups vinegar, 2 cups water and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar; simmer 15 minutes. Remove garlic. Pack peppers into hot jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Bring liquid to a boil. Fill jar to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from top with boiling liquid. Remove air bubbles, wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath at altitudes up to 1,000 feet. At altitudes between 1,001 and 6,000 feet, process for 15 minutes.

For more information on peppers, request HGIC 3440, *Pickled Peppers*, or HGIC 3300, *Preserving Vegetables*.

Source: Reynolds, Susan and Paulette Williams. *So Easy to Preserve*, Bulletin 989. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. Fourth edition revised by Elizabeth Andress and Judy Harrison, 1999.

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