



Get to know: Bell Pepper

Bell pepper, also known as pepper or capsicum, is a cultivar group of the species *Capsicum annuum*. Cultivars of the plant produce fruits in different colours, including red, yellow, orange, green, chocolate/brown, vanilla/white, and purple. Peppers are native to Mexico, Central America, and northern South America and were first introduced to our diet through Spain in 1463, and have since spread to the Africa, Asia and the remainder of Europe. Today, China is the world's largest pepper producer, followed by Mexico and Indonesia.

Nutrition

One cup (100g) of bell pepper has 20 calories, 4.6g of carbohydrates, 1.8 g of fibre, and 0.9g of protein. With 18 calories per 1-cup serving, bell peppers fill you up, without costing you too many calories. So if your desire it to lose weight, then vegetables such as bell peppers make a good choice.



Fun Facts

Bell peppers seem incapable of escaping the gender binary like the rest of us. However, if you are truly curious as to your bell pepper's gender, flip it over and look at the bumps on the bottom. If you count three, then we are talking about a "male" bell pepper – if you count four, then you are holding a lovely "female" in your hands. As with any ladies, four bump bell peppers are sweeter and better for eating raw than the male companion, who is best served after a bit of cooking. Gender stereotypes persist in the plant kingdom, it seems.

Health Benefits

Bell pepper is not only an excellent source of carotenoids, but also a good source of over 30 different members of the carotenoid nutrient family. A recent study from Spain took a close look vitamin C, vitamin E, and six of these carotenoids and found that bell pepper contained at least two-thirds of all the listed nutrients! All of which have been associated with great anti-oxidant capacities and cancer preventive effects. However, when shopping for bell peppers aim for the red and yellow varieties as the deeper the red, the more nutrients and vitamins it contains.

source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bell_pepper, www.whfoods.com, www.snopes.com

image: www.kineticsnj.com

What you can try with bell pepper:

Stuffed green bell peppers

Recipe by: Indian Kitchen

Serves: 4

What You Need:

- 6-7 small sized green peppers
- 4 potatoes boiled and mashed
- 3 tbsp cooking oil
- 3/4 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large onion finely chopped
- 1 green chilli finely chopped
- 2 tsp coriander powder
- 1/2 tsp cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- Salt to taste

What To Do:

1. Preheat oven to 200 C.
2. Thoroughly wash the bell pepper. Slice off thinly the tops of the green bell pepper and scoop out the core to make them hollow. Similarly slice off thinly from the bottom so that the peppers stand steady when placed on a baking tray
3. Mash the boiled potatoes, then add the rest of the spices and mash them in.
4. Heat oil in a pan and add onion. Cook till translucent then add ginger and green chillies. Mix in potato mixture and continue to cook for two minute
5. Stuff this mixture into peppers and stand on foil-lined baking tray
6. Bake it for 10 minutes until tender. Let stand a few minutes after baking.
7. You can sprinkle little bit of fresh coriander and toasted cumin seeds over the peppers (thinly sliced fresh chillies also an option) before serving

source: fostercitynewblog.wordpress.com/2012/05/22/stuffed-capsicum-pepper/

Don't feel like eating something spicy? Then you can try these:

- Green pepper and tomato salad: www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachael-ray/green-pepper-and-tomato-salad-recipe.html
- Green bell pepper soup: www.monsoonspice.com/2007/06/green-bell-peppercapsicum-soup.html
- Swiss Chard Rolls Stuffed with Brown Rice, Herbs & Bell Peppers: blog.sigonas.com/2014/12/15/in-the-kitchen-with-sigonas-local-swiss-chard