

# Peppers

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Peppers are a warm-season crop that will grow in most Texas areas. Red and green peppers have high amounts of vitamin C, limited amounts of vitamin A, and small amounts of several minerals. Red peppers have more vitamin A than do green peppers. Peppers are good raw or cooked. Eat them as a snack, use them to decorate food, or add them to salads and casseroles. You can also stuff peppers with seasoned breadcrumbs or meat and bake them.

## Grow it

### Varieties

- Big Bertha bell pepper, Grande jalapeño, TAM mild jalapeño, and Hidalgo serrano.

### Soil Preparation

- Mix compost into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil or incorporate it into the planting container along with 1 cup of 15-5-10 or 2 to 3 cups of organic fertilizer per 10 feet of row.

### Planting

- Buy healthy transplants that are 4 to 6 inches tall.
- About three to four hot pepper plants and eight to ten sweet pepper plants should be enough for a family of four.
- Do not cover the roots deeper than the original soil ball.

### Fertilizing

- After the first fruit begins to enlarge, place 2 teaspoons of 15-5-10 fertilizer or  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of organic fertilizer around each plant about 6 inches from the stem.
- Water the plant after adding the fertilizer. This will increase the yield and the quality of the peppers.

### Watering

- Water the plants enough to keep them from wilting, which reduces yield and the quality of the fruit.
- Slow, deep watering helps the root system grow strong.

### Care During the Season

- Pull by hand any weeds that are close to the plants.

### Harvesting

- If you pick the peppers when they are full size but still green, the yields will be greater. If you allow them to turn red, the vitamin A will be higher.
- The first peppers should be ready 8 to 10 weeks after transplanting.

### Insects and Diseases

- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

### Storing and Serving

- Store peppers in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator or use other covered containers. Use them within 3 to 5 days after harvesting.



Sun:  
At least 6  
hours



Soil:  
All types



Planting:  
Warm



Harvest:  
Summer-Fall



Life Cycle:  
Annual



Container  
Friendly

## Buy it

- Choose firm, brightly colored peppers with tight skin that are heavy for their size.
- Avoid dull, shriveled, or pitted peppers.

## Store it

- Refrigerate bell peppers in a plastic bag for use within 5 days.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

## Use it

### Beefy Vegetable Stuffed Peppers

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 1 lb extra-lean ground beef
- Black pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp oregano
- 1 small onion, minced
- ½ cup quick-cooking oatmeal
- 1 medium-sized zucchini, coarsely grated
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 (10-oz) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 3 medium-sized bell peppers, cut in half lengthwise, cored
- 2 (14.5-oz) cans no-salt-added diced tomatoes, juice reserved

#### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a large bowl, combine the beef, salt, pepper, oregano, onion, oatmeal, zucchini, egg, and spinach. Mix until well combined.

Arrange the pepper halves, cut side up, in a 9×13 baking dish and fill each pepper halfway with the meat mixture.

Pour the tomatoes and their juices over the peppers.

Cover with aluminum and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake the peppers until the mixture inside peppers reaches 165°F—about 30 to 45 more minutes.

### Sautéed Green Peppers

Course: Side Dish, Vegetables  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 2 medium-sized green bell peppers
- 2 tsp olive oil

#### Instructions:

Cut peppers into strips.

Sauté in olive oil in a non-stick skillet until crisp-tender.

## Learn about it

- Hot and sweet varieties of peppers originally came from Central and South America before being introduced into Europe in the 16th century.
- Peppers are free of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- They are low in sodium and calories but high in vitamin C.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

