



Sweet Bell Peppers



Fun Facts: All bell peppers start out green, but some are left on the plant longer before being harvested, so that other colors -- and a sweeter, more mellow flavor -- develop. Unlike sweet bell peppers, spicy peppers provide a burning sensation because they contain capsaicinoids, which act on pain receptors in the mouth -- not on our taste buds! These compounds are stored in the light-colored veins, on the walls, and around the seeds of hot peppers. Hot, spicy varieties include pimiento, tabasco, cayenne, chili and paprika peppers, and they should be handled with caution.

Selecting Fresh Peppers: Choose crisp, firm peppers that are 3 to 4 inches long, glossy and bright in color. Sweet bell peppers can be green, red, orange, yellow, brown, white, light yellow, lilac or purple. Avoid peppers with shriveled or wrinkled skin; with thin or flimsy walls; or with soft, watery, or sunken spots.

Measuring Fresh Peppers

1 pound = 2 to 3 medium whole = 3 1/2 cups raw sliced = 2 3/4 cups cooked sliced
1/2 cup raw, sliced = about 2 1/2 ounces by weight = about 75 grams

Handling and Preserving: Store unwashed peppers in a plastic bag to hold in moisture. They usually store well for up to ten days. Peppers keep best between 40-50° F, so put them in the vegetable bin rather than the main part of the refrigerator. Colder storage temperatures may result in discoloration and disagreeable flavors. Bell peppers freeze well. Wash, core, and cut them up, as desired, then spread in a single layer on a tray and freeze. Soon after they are frozen, loosen pieces and store in a sealed freezer bag. Upon thawing, the peppers will still be crisp and can be used raw, or in cooked dishes.

Preparation and Serving: Rinse peppers under cold running water to remove dirt. Cut off bruises and decay. Remove the stem, center membrane parts, and seeds. Delicious raw as a relish or in salads. Or enjoy peppers grilled, roasted, baked, steamed, microwaved, boiled, pan-fried or stir-fried. Use as directed in a recipe.

Nutrition Facts for one serving, or 1/2 cup chopped raw sweet bell pepper: Calories 20; Protein 1 gram; Carbohydrates 5 grams; Fat 0 grams. All sweet peppers are very high in vitamin C. Red sweet peppers are also very high in vitamin A.

References: ESHA Food Processor; www.about.produce.com; www.urbanext.uiuc.edu; Food for Fifty, 11th edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall; <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF1186.pdf>

Prepared by Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Nutrition. June 2003, updated Aug. 2013. **Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas.** Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider & employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. **The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.**