

Peppers

From black to purple to scarlet, from pointed to round to twisted, from tangy to hot to fruity, peppers display a stunning array of characteristics. Whether sweet or hot, a pepper will spark up almost any dish.

STORAGE

Place whole, unwashed peppers in a plastic bag, seal, and refrigerate for a week or more. Dry hot peppers by hanging a string of them in a dark, warm, nonhumid corner (not over the stove).

HANDLING

Rinse peppers just before use. For sweet peppers, cut around the stem with a small knife and lift out the core. Slice down the side to open it up and then cut out the inner membranes. When handling hot peppers, be sure not to touch your eyes or nose, and wash your hands well afterward. For milder dishes, cut out the heat-filled seeds and inner membranes and use just the flesh.

Bell Peppers Lemonly Dressed and Cumin-esque

This versatile recipe will add just the right amount of color to any dish in need of some visual pizzazz. What's more, the lemony cumin in the peppers will pizzazzify the flavors on your plate. *Angelic Organics Kitchen* (adapted from *Recipes from a Kitchen Garden*).

Serves 4

- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 red or purple bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 2 green or yellow bell peppers, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 1 large lemon)
- 2 tablespoons minced parsley
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced (about 1/2 teaspoon) (optional)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped scallions or red onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the peppers; sauté, stirring until slightly soft, about 3 minutes. Let cool.

2. Combine the remaining oil, lemon juice, parsley, cumin, honey, and garlic in a large jar. With the lid tightly screwed on, shake the jar vigorously until the oil and vinegar have combined and thickened.

3. Toss the peppers and scallions or red onion with the vinaigrette in a large bowl; add the salt and season with pepper to taste. Cover; refrigerate for 1 hour.

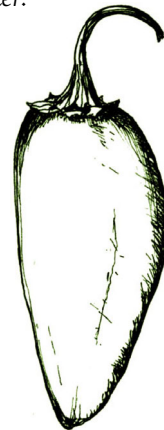


Roasted Red Pepper Soup

Served hot or cold, this soup is packed with a savory-sweet roasted pepper flavor that might have you skipping the main course and opting for a second bowl of soup instead. It's preferable to use home-made roasted red bell peppers in this soup. *Shareholder*.

Serves 4 to 6

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 small potato, quartered
- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano or thyme, or 1/2 tablespoon dried, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 4 large red bell peppers, roasted, skinned, chopped
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken stock or water
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar or more to taste
- freshly ground black pepper
- salt
- freshly grated Parmesan cheese croutons (optional)



1. Melt the butter in a soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, potato, garlic, bay leaf, and herbs; sauté until potato and onion begin to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute. Add the roasted peppers, paprika, and 1 teaspoon salt; cook for 30 seconds.

2. Pour in stock or water and scrape up any of the flavorful caramelized pieces stuck to the bottom of the pot. Bring the soup to a boil, then lower heat to a gentle simmer; cook, partially covered, for 30 minutes.

3. Purée soup in a blender or food processor or run it through a food mill. Return it to the pot and heat until warmed through. Add the balsamic vinegar and a few grindings of fresh black pepper. Taste; add salt if desired.

4. Garnish each serving with some Parmesan, a little fresh herb, and croutons if desired.

An Intern's Dream

Lemus and I were going to harvest peppers. They were under the water. We had to pay an old woman a dollar before diving in. We swam into an underwater tunnel where the peppers were.

Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook.

