

SWEET PEPPERS

Cafeteria | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.



Benefits

Red and green peppers are an excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin A and a good source of potassium. They also contain vitamin B6 and folic acid.

Tidbit

Sweet (also known as bell) peppers are native to Central and South America. They were one of the first plants to be cultivated there. The Spanish and Portuguese explorers helped spread the cultivation of peppers across the globe. Nowadays, peppers can be found in almost all types of cuisine. The biggest growers of peppers are China, Turkey, Nigeria, Spain, Mexico, and Romania.

Selection Tip

Choose firm, glossy, plump peppers that have no blemishes or soft spots. The flesh should be brightly colored and should yield to gentle pressure.

Storage Tip

Sweet peppers can be stored unwashed in a perforated plastic bag or the vegetable drawer of the refrigerator, where they will keep for about a week. They freeze well raw, but it is better to wash them first. For maximum flavor and nutritional value, store them whole.

Kid-friendly eating tips

- Try serving different colored sweet peppers so kids can pick which variety they like the best.

Varieties

There are dozens of varieties of sweet peppers. The most common are: red, yellow, and green bell peppers, purple peppers, lunchbox peppers

Cooking Tips

- Sweet peppers can be eaten raw or cooked, though their sweetness becomes more prominent when cooked. To easily remove the skin, place pepper under oven broiler and grill on all sides for 10-12 minutes or until the skin blackens and swells. Cover it with a damp cloth, wrap in a sheet of aluminum foil, and when it has cooled, peel it with a knife and rinse under running water.

Recipes

Bell Pepper Egg-in-a-Hole

Turkey Taco Stuffed Peppers

Total Time: 45 mins | Prep: 10 mins | Cooking: 35 mins

Ingredients:

1 lb Ground turkey
Bell peppers
1 can Black beans
1 cup Corn, frozen kernels
2 cloves Garlic
1 Onion, small
1 Handful minced parsley
1 cup Chicken broth
2 cups Salsa
1 cup Rice, cooked
2 tsp Taco seasoning
1 cup Cheddar cheese
1 cup Pepper jack cheese
1 Sour cream
3/4 cup Water

Directions:

1. Start by cooking a pound of ground turkey with some onion and garlic. This will add flavor to the meat itself. If your turkey releasing a lot of liquid during cooking, you may want to drain it before adding anything else.
2. Next, add some of your favorite salsa, stir in some taco seasoning and water and let that pot simmer for about 10-15 minutes. Let mixture thicken and add cheese and combine. Stir in some cooked white rice, black beans and corn to finish filling.
3. While the filling is cooking, prepare the bell peppers. Slice the pepper in half lengthwise then remove and discard seeds and membranes. Rinse the peppers and arrange them in a 9 x 13-inch baking dish.
4. Stuff the peppers with the meat mixture. Depending on how full you pack the peppers, you may end up with 6-8 stuffed peppers. Top each pepper with a spoonful of salsa and a sprinkling of cheese. Pour some water or chicken broth around the peppers in the dish and cover with nonstick foil. Bake until peppers are soft and the filling is hot and bubbly.

(Source: Yellow Bliss Road)

Mini Activities

Bell Pepper Painting

Materials

1-2 bell peppers cut in half
Different colors washable paint
Large poster paper
Paintbrush
Water
Paper towel

Directions

1. Prepare the peppers by slicing them in half and patting the cut ends dry with paper towel.
2. Then have a student dip the cut end of the pepper into the paint and stamp it onto the poster paper creating a flower or leaf shaped stamp.
3. Allow them to get creative and create a pepper garden with different colors.
4. Finish the painting by letting them use the paintbrush to add in bugs, butterflies, or a sun.

