

January – Featured Vegetable: GREEN PEPPER

WASH. SLICE.
EAT.



(how easy is that?)



Hello, I'm **Pepe Pepper!**¹

I belong to a large family of peppers that come in many different sizes, shapes, flavors, and colors. Some peppers are SWEET and other peppers are HOT. Of course, I'm a SWEET pepper, and I'm known as a green bell pepper! Well, let's get going because there are so many cool things to explore about peppers.

Facts

The most popular sweet pepper in the United States is the bell pepper.

Most peppers belong to the *Capsicum annuum* species.

Bell peppers are sweet.

Chile peppers are hot.

As bell peppers mature, their color changes from green to red and they become sweeter.

Dried chile pepper wreaths are called "Ristras" - a symbol of plenty and hope.

History

Bell peppers are native to Mexico, Central America and South America.

Peppers were named by Christopher Columbus and Spanish explorers who were searching for peppercorn plants that produce the spice known as black pepper.

In 1492, Columbus and his explorers discovered sweet and hot peppers in the West Indies and took samples back to Europe. Peppers quickly became popular in Europe as a food, spice, and condiment. Twenty years later, travelers found bell pepper varieties growing throughout the

Source: ¹Dole 5 A Day. www.dole5aday.com

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West Indies, Central America, Mexico, Peru and Chili. Since then, peppers have been introduced to many other parts of the world including Africa and Asia.

Where Grown

Most green bell peppers brought to the United States come from Mexico, but they could also come from the Dominican Republic, Netherlands, Belgium, or Canada

Most green bell peppers produced for the marketplace in the United States are grown in Florida. Other states include California, Texas, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

Types

Did you know that peppers that come in many different sizes, shapes, flavors, and colors? Some peppers are SWEET and other peppers are HOT. While most Americans still prefer sweet peppers, the hot peppers, also called chile peppers, are very popular in Mexican, Indian, Thai and Spanish cooking.

There are four different kinds of *sweet peppers*: Bell, Banana, Cubanelle, and Pimento. A neat thing about bell peppers is how they mature to various colors depending on the variety. The most common varieties of bell peppers will turn from green to red. And remember, as green peppers mature by ripening on the vine, they become sweeter. Other varieties will turn yellow, orange, brown, or purple. How many of these sweet peppers have you tried? They all taste different and are delicious. Try some today.

Hot peppers, sometimes called chile peppers, also come in many different shapes, colors and flavors. Some of the more popular types include: Anaheim, Habanero, Jalapeno, and Serrano.

Nutrients

- High in vitamin C
- Sweet and hot red peppers are a good source of vitamin A

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