

## Bright & Beautiful

# Bell Peppers

Crunchy and bold when raw, smoky and sweet when cooked, bell peppers are loaded with vitamins and antioxidants to help boost your immune system. Depending on the color (red are the most nutrient-packed), one cup of these beauties can provide you with up to three times your total daily intake of Vitamin C and 100 percent of your daily requirements for Vitamin A.

### What to look for:

When picking your perfect pepper, make sure it's firm, shiny, unblemished, and has a weighty feel.

Go for darker colors (green, purple) if you are looking for a bolder, bitterer taste. Otherwise, the light colors (yellow, red) will give you the sweet "zing" you are looking for.

### Great for

- pizza toppings
- fajitas and stir-fry
- adding "crunch" to a salad
- flavoring egg dishes (omelets, quiches)
- roasting over a hot grill (skewers, kabobs)
- pureeing into sauces or dips
- dipping raw into cottage cheese or hummus

### Roasted Bell Peppers Stuffed with Quinoa

Serves 6

There will be looks of envy from the meat-eating crowd when you serve this colorful and delicious entrée of bell peppers stuffed with mushrooms, carrots, spinach, quinoa, and cashews.

#### Ingredients:

- 7 bell peppers (1 cored, seeded and chopped; tops removed and reserved from remaining 6 then cored and seeded)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for oiling the pan
- 1 red onion, chopped
- ½ pound sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- ¼ lb. baby spinach
- 1 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 cup uncooked quinoa, rinsed and cooked according to package directions
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup roasted, salted cashews

#### Directions:

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until transparent. Add mushrooms and cook until softened. Add carrots and chopped bell pepper, cook until just softened, then add parsley and spinach. Let spinach wilt, then stir in cinnamon, cumin and cooked quinoa and toss gently. Add salt, pepper, and cashews and cook 1 to 2 minutes more. Set aside to let filling cool until just warm.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan with oil then set aside. Divide quinoa mixture evenly among remaining 6 bell peppers. Top each pepper with its reserved top, then arrange them upright in pan. Cover with foil and bake until peppers are tender and juicy and filling is hot (about 1 hour). Transfer to plates and serve.

#### Nutrition Facts (per serving):

Calories—250	Carbohydrate—36g
Total Fat—10g	Dietary Fiber—7g
Saturated Fat—1.5g	Sugar—6g
Sodium—280mg	Protein—9g

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### Kick-off Kabobs

Serves 24

Make these quick-and-easy spicy Italian kabobs to kick off your next tailgate party.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large green bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 lbs. boneless pork chops, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons dried red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon fennel seed
- 1 large onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 24 6-inch wooden skewers (soak in water for 30 minutes before using)

#### Directions:

Place pork cubes in resealable plastic bag; add salad dressing, red pepper flakes and fennel seed. Seal bag; refrigerate for at least 1 hour to overnight to marinate pork. When ready to cook, thread pork, peppers, and onion on skewers. Discard marinade. Place kabobs on greased broiler pan and broil 5 inches from heat, or grill over medium-hot coals for about 5 minutes per side.

#### Nutrition Facts (per serving):

Calories—70	Carbohydrate—2g
Total Fat—2g	Dietary Fiber—0g
Saturated Fat—0g	Sugar—0g
Sodium—135mg	Protein—9g

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**Black Bean, Couscous, and Pepper Salad**

Serves 2

This is a simple salad using quick-cooking couscous. It can be made the night before and refrigerated until needed. The flavor will improve with age.

**Ingredients**

- 1 medium red bell pepper, coarsely chopped (about 1 cup)
- ¾ cup water
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- ½ cup quick-cooking couscous
- ½ cup rinsed and drained canned black beans
- ¼ lb. lean ham, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup diced red onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil and vinegar dressing
- several drops hot pepper sauce
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- several lettuce leaves (optional)

**Directions:**

Bring water and olive oil to a boil. Remove from heat, add couscous, stir, and cover with a lid. Let stand 5 minutes. Place black beans, ham, onion, and red bell pepper in a medium-sized bowl. Add the couscous. Drizzle dressing over salad. Add hot pepper sauce and salt and pepper to taste. Toss well. Sprinkle cilantro on top. To serve, arrange lettuce leaves on two plates and spoon salad onto the lettuce.

**Nutrition Facts (per serving):**

Calories—391	Carbohydrate—52g
Total Fat—9g	Dietary Fiber—8g
Saturated Fat—2g	Sugar—3g
Sodium—874mg	Protein—25g

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**Cajun Bean Dip with Red Bell Peppers**

Serves 8 to 12

Try this red bean dip, spiked with lemon juice and garlic and garnished with colorful red peppers, onions, and celery. It's a great party food to satisfy everyone, including those in search of veggies.

**Ingredients:**

- ¼ cup finely chopped red bell pepper, plus 4 to 6 whole red bell peppers, sliced
- 2 (15 oz.) cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon mild Cajun seasoning
- 1 clove garlic, more to taste
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- ¼ cup finely chopped sweet onion

**Directions:**

Purée beans, lemon juice, 3 tablespoons oil, seasoning and garlic in a food processor until smooth and creamy. Transfer to a bowl. Garnish with chopped peppers, celery and onion. Drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and serve with sliced peppers for dipping.

**Nutrition Facts (per serving):**

Calories—160	Carbohydrate—20g
Total Fat—6g	Dietary Fiber—8g
Saturated Fat—1g	Sugar—2g
Sodium—170mg	Protein—6g

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