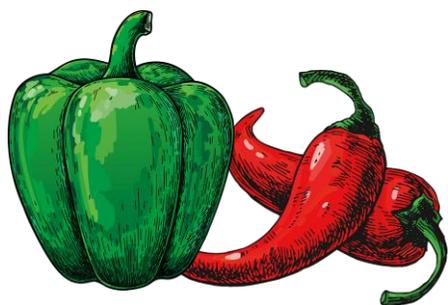




Peppers



Peppers are tender, heat-loving plants that grow well during summer in Skagit. Peppers grown in Skagit include both sweet bell pepper in a rainbow of colors – green, yellow, red, purple, and orange and a wide variety of spicy-flavored chili peppers. Peppers come in a range of ‘heat’ depending on the capsaicin content - sweet bell peppers have a low level of capsaicin and are not spicy, Jalapeno peppers have more spice/heat, the Serrano Chiles are even hotter, and the hottest are the ghost peppers. The type of pepper used in cooking will have a significant influence on the flavor profile of the recipes prepared.

Nutrition

Peppers are a significant source of Vitamins A and Vitamin C. One cup diced, raw green peppers contains 34 calories, and has no fat or cholesterol and is low in sodium.

Note: Chiles grown in the Hatch Valley in New Mexico that may look like shorter Anaheims can be extremely hot. These delicious chiles have become available recently in Washington state, so check labels or ask your produce person about how spicy they are.



Selection

Select firm peppers with full ripe color according to the variety. Avoid wrinkled or soft peppers. Peppers range from mild to fiery in taste. Very hot peppers are usually smaller (1-3 inches long) and add a distinct taste and heat to salsas. Mild peppers are often larger (4-10 inches long) and include Anaheim, Colorado and Hungarian Yellow Wax. Choose a mild pepper when the recipe calls for long green chiles. Jalapenos are the most popular medium hot pepper. Other Varieties include such as Serranos, Cayenne, and Habaneros are a good deal hotter.

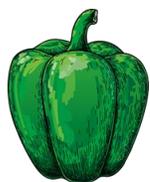
Storage

Peppers can be stored in the refrigerator, dry (moisture causes peppers to rot), unwashed, and uncut placed in a dry plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper drawer at an optimal temperature of 40°F. Peppers will last 1-2 weeks when stored in this manner.

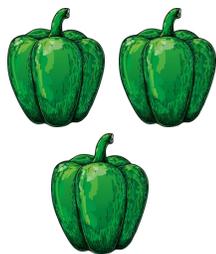
Note: Pepper varieties are interchangeable in recipes. Select any variety or combination of hot and mild peppers to create a flavor you like, as long as you do not exceed the total amount of peppers specified in the recipe and prepare as instructed.



Measurements



Size

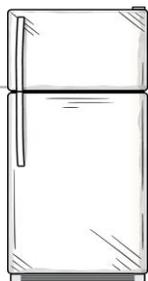


Weight



Volume

Freezing



- Select crisp, firm, green or red peppers. Wash, cut out stems and remove seeds.
- Freeze whole, halved or diced.
- Peppers of all kinds may be chopped and frozen. No blanching is required. Pack in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags, squeezing out as much air as possible. Seal, label and freeze.
- Whole and halved peppers take up less room when blanched. Blanch small whole peppers for 3 minutes, strips and rings for 2 minutes. Cool immediately by immersing in ice water for an equivalent amount of time. Drain and pack in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags, squeezing out as much air as possible. Seal, label and freeze.



Tip: Place waxed/parchment paper between peppers/chiles for easier separation.

Drying

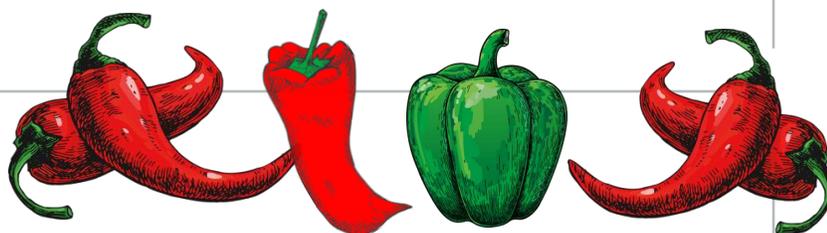


Preparation: Cut mature pumpkin or squash into strips 1-inch wide. Peel off rind; scrape off fiber and seeds. Cut peeled strips into pieces about 1/8 inch thick.

Pretreatment: None, or water blanch 1 minute or steam blanch 2-3 minutes.

Drying Procedure:

- Spread in a thin layer on drying trays.
- Dry at 140°F until tough to brittle, approximately 10-16 hours.
- Package dried food in moisture/vapor-proof containers. Label.
- Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



Prep/Peel



To peel peppers, either blanch in boiling water or blister using one of the following methods:

- Oven or broiler method: Place peppers in a hot oven (400° F) or broiler for 6-8 minutes until the skins blister.
- Range-top method: Cover hot burner, either gas or electric, with heavy wire mesh. Place peppers on a burner for several minutes until the skins blister.
- Allow peppers to cool. Place in a pan and cover with a damp cloth. This will make peeling the peppers easier. After several minutes, peel each pepper.



Caution: The volatile oils found in some pepper varieties can cause burns. Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.



Peppers are a low acid food. Pressure canning is necessary when canning peppers to prevent the growth of botulinum bacteria. Refer to National Center for Home Food Preservation for Pressure Canning instructions https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/peppers.html#:~:text=Flatten%20whole%20peppers.,the%20method%20of%20canning%20used.





Pickling

Pickled peppers products may be safely preserved using the boiling water canning method. Because peppers are low in acid, the proportion of vinegar to water in a pickling recipe is critical. Use only tested, approved pickling recipes and follow instruction for preparation of peppers.

Pickled Bell Peppers (Bread and Butter Style)

Yield: About 9 pints.

Ingredients:

- 7 lbs. firm bell peppers
- 3 1/2 cups sugar
- 3 cups vinegar (5% acidity)
- 3 cups water
- 9 cloves garlic
- 4 1/2 tsp. canning or pickling salt

Select and wash sweet peppers. Cut into quarters, remove cores and seeds, and cut away any blemishes. Slice peppers into strips. Boil vinegar, water, and sugar for 1 minute.

Add peppers and bring to a boil. Place ½ clove of garlic and ¼ teaspoon salt in each pre-sterilized (*), hot half-pint jar. Double the amounts for pint jars. Add pepper strips and cover with hot vinegar mixture, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Adjust two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner according to directions below. At the completion of processing, turn off heat and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours at room temperature and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

*Pre-sterilization is required for jars processed for less than 10 minutes in a boiling water canner. To do this, boil empty jars for 10 minutes before filling.

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–6,000 ft
Hot	Half pints or pints	5 minutes	10 minutes

Pickled Hot Peppers

Type of peppers for best results: Hungarian, banana, chile, jalapeno

Yield: About 9 pints

- 4 lbs. hot long red, green, or yellow peppers
- 3 lbs. sweet red and green peppers, mixed
- 5 cups vinegar (5% acidity)
- 1 cup water
- 4 tsp canning or pickling salt
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 cloves garlic

Wash peppers. If small peppers are left whole, slash 2 to 4 slits in each. Quarter large peppers. Blister skin to peel as described above. Flatten small peppers. Fill hot half-pint or pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Combine and heat other ingredients to boiling and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove garlic. Add hot pickling mixture over peppers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a clean damp paper towel. Adjust two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner as described below. At the completion of processing, turn off heat and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours at room temperature and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–6,000 ft
Hot	Half pints or pints	10 minutes	15 minutes



Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and boiling water canning—consistent with USDA Food Preservation and Food Safety recommendations. Pressure canning for low acid foods such as meats and vegetables is not included.

Additional resources and recipes, as well as information on Pressure Canning, can be found on the WSU Skagit Food Preservation Website <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/fam/food-preservation/> or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>.

Copyright 2022 WSU Skagit Extension, J. Bryan-Goforth, L. Powers-Hammond, D. Smith. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed on this fact sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA. WSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

