



# Hot Peppers

## Growing and Harvest Information

Some recommended hot pepper varieties for St. Louis: 'Jalapeño', 'Anaheim' (mild), 'Long Red Cayenne', 'Thai', and 'Habanero'.

Peppers are best started from seeds indoors in late winter and transplanted into garden after the soil has warmed up in the spring. They don't grow well in cold, wet soil. Raised beds, plastic mulch, and floating row covers can be used to keep peppers warm and drain the soil during cold weather. Set transplants 18-24" apart within a row, or 14-18" in all directions in the bed.

Peppers can be harvested at any size you desire, but are typically harvested when they are fully ripen because this is when they are the hottest! Cut the pods rather than pulling from the vines to avoid disturbing the roots.

## Introduction

Peppers are warm-season vegetables and are a good source of vitamins A and C. Chili peppers are perennial subshrubs native to South America, which are grown as annuals in our colder climate. They can range in hotness from mild to fiery hot! The burning sensation is attributed to chemical compounds called capsaicinoids, which act on the pain receptors in the mouth, not the taste buds. Experts agree that long, hot, dry summers produce the best (hottest) chili peppers.

## Preservation

### Storage:

- Store peppers in a paper bag in the refrigerator for longer life.
- Chili peppers will become soft and discolored as they begin to spoil. Discard any peppers that have an off smell or appearance.

### Freezing:

- Bell peppers and hot peppers are one of the few vegetables that can be frozen without being branched. However, they will be limp after being thawed, so it is best to use them in cooked dishes.
- When handling hot peppers, wear rubber gloves to prevent hands from burning and do not touch your eyes.
- Wash hot peppers with cool water before cutting them open and removing the seems and stem.
- Package hot peppers raw in tightly sealed package before placing in the freezer.

## Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	EXCELLENT
Minerals	GOOD
Fiber	MODERATE

## Use By Guide

Vegetable State	Use by
Raw (refrigerated)	7 days
Frozen	10-12 months
Home-canned	1 year



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### Fun Fact:

A single raw red pepper can meet the daily requirement for two important antioxidants - vitamins A and C!

### Prepare Hot Peppers Like This:

Baked  
Fresh  
Grilled  
Pickled  
Pureed  
Roasted  
Stir-fry  
Stuffed

### Try Hot Peppers In:

Pickling  
Relishes  
Salads  
Soup  
Stew  
Stir-fry

### Canning::

- Make sure to use a pressure canner and follow correct processing times. The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good resource for instruction: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_04/peppers.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/peppers.html)
- Remember to wear rubber gloves to protect hands from burning and do not touch eyes when handling hot peppers.



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## Preparation

### Recipe 1: *Mini Stuffed Peppers*

#### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds jalapeños or mix of mini bell and hot peppers
- 12 oz. goat cheese or cream cheese
- 1 tbs. honey
- optional: fresh herbs as topping

#### Directions

- Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Cut all peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Spoon goat cheese into center of each pepper. Lightly drizzle with honey, salt, or fresh herbs. Bake for 10 minutes, serve warm!

### Recipe 2: *Quick Pickled Peppers*

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. hot pepper of choice (ex. jalapeño)
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar (or white wine/white vinegar)
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbs. honey or sugar of choice
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and mashed
- 1 tsp. salt
- 28 oz. or larger jar

#### Directions

- Wear gloves when handling hot peppers. For less spicy pickles, remove pepper membrane and seeds before thinly slicing. Slice off the top of bell pepper and remove seeds before chopping.
- Combine peppers and smashed garlic in jar.
- In small saucepan, combine vinegar, water, honey and salt. Bring mixture close to a boil on stove, stirring occasionally to dissolve sweetener. Remove from heat and carefully pour liquid over the peppers. Use knife to push peppers down if needed.
- Let peppers cool to room temperature before screwing on lid and refrigerating. The pickles may need a few days to absorb flavor, but feel free to sample! Pickles should keep for at least a month.