Pepper Basics

Purchasing & Preparing Peppers
- Sweet peppers should be fresh-looking, firm, thick-fleshed and a bright green or red color, depending on the stage of maturity.
- Avoid peppers that are soft and dull-looking.
- At home, keep sweet peppers cool and humid and use them within a few days for maximum freshness.
- To prepare peppers to stuff or bake, cut off tops and remove seeds and membrane from inside. Cook peppers in a small amount of boiling water for 5 minutes, then drain, stuff and bake as your recipe directs.
- When working with hot peppers, always wear plastic gloves or coat hands with fat to avoid burns.

Pepper Tidbits
- For a spicy side dish, sauté sliced peppers with minced fresh garlic in olive oil.
- Cut fresh green or red sweet peppers in quarters, remove seeds and membrane, and stuff each quarter with seasoned cream cheese for a colorful hors d’oeuvre.
- Add ¼ cup finely chopped green pepper to 1 pound of ground beef for extra pep in hamburger or meatloaf.
- Sauté sliced peppers with fresh mushrooms and onions to top steak sandwiches, hamburgers and hot dogs, subs, or any favorite sandwich.
- Raw pepper rings are delicious on sandwiches.
- Wrap crisp pepper strips in plastic to preserve fresh taste and crisp texture and pack into lunch bags for a healthful and delicious snack.
- Chop fresh sweet peppers into tuna or egg salad for bright color and terrific taste.
- Stir-fry sweet peppers with beef or chicken for quick and easy cooking.

Pickled Peppers (Hungarian, Banana, Other Varieties)
Makes about 8 pint jars
Wash 4 quarts long red, green or yellow peppers and drain. Cut 2 small slits in each pepper. Dissolve 1½ cups salt in 1 gallon water. Pour over peppers and let stand 12 to 18 hours in refrigerator. Drain peppers, rinse again and drain thoroughly.

Combine 2 tablespoons horseradish, 2 cloves garlic, 10 cups vinegar, 2 cups water and ¼ cup sugar; simmer 15 minutes. Remove garlic. Pack peppers into hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Bring liquid to a boil. Fill jar to ½ inch from top with boiling liquid. Remove air bubbles, wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath at altitudes up to 1,000 feet. At altitudes between 1,001 and 6,000 feet, process for 15 minutes.

For more information on peppers, request HGIC 3440, Pickled Peppers, or HGIC 3300, Preserving Vegetables.

Source: