

Bell peppers - the nutrition powerhouse

Summer is not only the time to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, it is also a time to enjoy a wide array of seasonal vegetables and fruits including bell peppers. While these block-shaped and crunchy vegetables are readily available in supermarkets, Ontario-grown field bell peppers are only in season between July and October.

Bell peppers are densely packed with essential nutrients, such as vitamin C and folate, which are important for the immune system and cell growth and development. Bell peppers are green, yellow, orange or red in colour. Red, orange and yellow peppers are also rich in beta-carotene, a phytonutrient that can be converted to vitamin A in the body. As nutrition powerhouses, bell peppers are also low in calories. Did you know that one raw sweet medium green pepper contains only 19 calories?

Because bell peppers are full of goodness, they are a good option to include as part of your daily vegetable and fruit intake of 7 to 10 servings, as recommended by [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#). As a great addition to salads, a stir-fry and the grill as kabobs, the vividly bright colors of peppers can also spice up your mouth-watering dishes by making them visually appealing and more flavourful.

Roasted Red Pepper Potato Soup

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

4 large red bell peppers	4 cups chicken stock (or vegetable stock for vegetarian option)
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and diced	¼ cup cream or milk (or low-fat milk for a healthier option)
1 large russet potato, peeled and diced	3 tablespoons butter (or non-hydrogenated margarine for a healthier option)
3 cloves garlic	
Cayenne, salt and pepper to taste	

Source: www.simplyrecipes.com

1. Roast the red peppers by placing them over or under an open flame until they blacken on all sides (You can use a grill, cook-top gas burner, or oven broiler.). Place the blackened peppers in a bag. Close the bag and let the peppers steam for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the skins feel like they can easily be slipped off. Remove the peppers from the bag, peel off the blackened skins and remove the seeds. Chop the peppers thoroughly.
2. Heat the butter in a large soup pot over medium to high heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the diced potatoes and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, then add the garlic and roasted peppers. Stir well and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add the stock, stir well and bring to a simmer. Cook over medium heat until potatoes are soft.
4. Puree the soup in a blender or food processor until very smooth. Fill the blender about halfway with the soup. Start the blender on low and keep your hand on the top, in case the lid wants to pop off from the rising steam. Once everything is well chopped, turn the blender to its highest setting and blend until smooth, about one minute.
5. Return to a clean pot set over low heat. Add the low-fat milk, stir well and taste. Add some cayenne, salt and pepper to taste.

For more information:

[Foodland Ontario](#)

Do you have questions on nutrition and healthy eating? Contact *EatRight Ontario* at 1-877-510-5102 to speak to a Registered Dietitian.