


Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 14

# Colorful Bell Peppers. Boost Immunity, Beautify Skin, and Ward off Aging!!



Sweet bell peppers (also known as paprika) are extremely nutritious, containing about twice as much vitamin C and three times as much carotene as green bell peppers! While green peppers are harvested when unripe, sweet bell peppers are harvested when they mature, making them thicker, juicier, and sweeter.

By Makiko Hei

©Maria\_Usp/ Shutterstock.com

## Nutrition in bell peppers

Sweet bell peppers have a strong antioxidant effect. It also helps remove unwanted cholesterol from the body, and reportedly helps prevent lifestyle diseases such as arteriosclerosis and myocardial infarction. They are also rich in vitamin C, which prevents skin spots and wrinkles, and vitamin E, which prevents skin aging.

In addition,  $\beta$ -carotene, a component of the pigment in bell peppers, has the same function as vitamin A in the body, strengthening the mucous membranes and enhancing immunity.

## Color differences and nutrition

Sweet bell peppers change color depending on their state of maturity. The earliest harvest is yellow, the next is orange, and the most mature is red.

- **Yellow:** It contains high amounts of  $\alpha$ -carotene, which is a strong antioxidant. It also contains zeaxanthin, a type of carotenoid, which helps maintain eye health.
- **Red:** Rich in vitamin C and  $\beta$ -carotene. It also contains capsaicin, which is an antioxidant and cancer-preventive agent.
- **Orange:** It contains a good balance of nutrients from red and yellow bell peppers.

## How to identify good bell peppers

They should be dark in color, firm, shiny, and heavy. If the skin is wrinkled, it is not fresh.

## How to store bell peppers

### • Refrigerated

Cut in half and remove the stem and seeds, and soak in water for about an hour. Wipe dry, wrap in a paper towel, place in a storage bag, and store in the vegetable compartment of the refrigerator. Use within a week. Be sure to dry them thoroughly, as any remaining water makes them spoil more quickly.

### • Frozen

Wipe dry as when refrigerating them and cut into desired size. Place as flat as possible in a storage bag, seal the bag to remove air, and place the bag horizontally on a cooking tray and freeze (after freezing, you can also store the bag upright). Use frozen when cooking; will keep for about a month.

## Cooking tips

Carotene is fat-soluble, so cooking it in oil improves its absorption. In addition, while vitamin C is normally sensitive to heat, bell peppers have a firm pulp structure, so there is almost no loss of vitamin C when they are cooked.

# Khao Pad Gaprao: Thai stir-fried minced chicken with basil

Enjoy this dish with plenty of bell peppers.

**Cooking time: 30 minutes**

**[Ingredients]** 2 servings

200 g minced chicken thigh meat  
 1/4 onion (50g)  
 1 small red bell pepper (120g net)  
 1 or 2 dried red peppers, cut into small pieces.  
 (add or subtract to taste)

A. 1 tablespoon ginger, minced

A. 1 clove garlic, minced

B. 2/3 tablespoon num pla (or soy sauce)

B. 2/3 tablespoon oyster sauce

B. 1/2 teaspoon sugar

10-15 sweet basil leaves (or 1/2 teaspoon dried basil)

2 eggs

Cooking oil as needed

Black pepper as to taste

Rice as needed



## [How to cook]

1. Coarsely chop the onion, remove the stem, seeds and ribs from the bell pepper, and cut into 1.5cm cubes.
2. Heat 1/2 tablespoon of oil and ingredients in A in a frying pan over low heat. When fragrant, add onion and red pepper and sauté over medium heat until onion is transparent, then add minced chicken.
3. When the minced chicken in (2) starts to change color, add bell peppers and stir-fry, then add the ingredients in B and basil, sprinkle with black pepper. (Pad gaprao is done.)
4. Fry eggs. Add a little more oil and fry for about 1 minute until the whites are crispy around the edges.
5. Place pad gaprao on hot rice and top with (4).



## Tips

- When frying minced chicken, flatten the meat with a spatula and break it into pieces when the minced chicken changes color. It is more satisfying to eat and tastier than finely chopped pieces.
- Basil leaves look great on top of the finished dish.

# Honey Vinegar Marinated Bell Peppers

Bell peppers roasted whole in the oven are twice as sweet and delicious.

**Cooking time: 50 minutes**

**[Ingredients]** 2 servings

1 red bell pepper

1 yellow bell pepper

A. 1 tablespoon olive oil

A. 2/3 tablespoon rice vinegar (or wine vinegar)

A. 2/3 tablespoon honey

A. 1/4 teaspoon salt

1-2 sprigs fresh thyme (1/4 teaspoon dry if fresh is not available)



## [How to cook]

Preparations

- Measure the ingredients in A into a storage container and mix well.
- Preheat oven to 180°C.

1. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment, place whole bell peppers on the sheet, and bake in the oven at 180°C for 25 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 20 minutes, remove from heat, transfer to a cooking tray to remove the stem and peel the peppers. Add the juice from the peppers to ingredients A.
2. Cut the peppers into 8 equal pieces, place in the container with the ingredients in A, blend all together, and add the thyme leaves. Refrigerate well for the best flavor.

1-1



1-2



2



## Tips

- Remove from oven when bell peppers begin to brown in places. Adjust the baking time to more or less than 25 minutes as you see fit.
- If the olive oil hardens after refrigeration, set the container out at room temperature for a bit so it can melt.
- You can store marinated bell peppers for about a week in the refrigerator.

## Profile

### Makiko Hei

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto "Let's make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes."

HP: <https://vege3.jp/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/makichanshokudo/>

