

Peppers



Information is provided for freezing, canning, and pickling peppers. For other recipes containing peppers and for salsas, refer to the publication *Preserving Tomatoes*, MF-1185.

Quality

Select firm, yellow, green, or red peppers free of disease and insect damage.

Quantity

An average of 9 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 25 pounds and yields 20 to 30 pints, an average of 1 pound per pint. Two-thirds of a pound (3 peppers) yields 1 frozen pint.

Freezing

Freeze only up to 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day.

Bell or sweet: Sweet or bell peppers can be frozen without blanching. Blanching peppers are limp and easier to pack, however they can only be used in cooked dishes. Select crisp, tender, green or bright red pods. Wash, cut out the stems, cut them in half, and remove the seeds and white membrane. Cut in halves, slices, ½-inch strips, rings or dice depending on the intended use.

Blanched — Water blanch the halves 3 minutes, strips or rings 2 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal, and freeze.

Unblanched — Package raw, seal, and freeze.

Hot peppers: Wash and stem. Package raw. Seal and freeze. Caution: To prevent burning your hands when handling hot peppers, wear rubber gloves. Do not touch your eyes.

Peeling methods

Wash the peppers. Peel the peppers by placing them in a 400° to 450°F oven for 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow them to stand in a wet towel to steam for 15 minutes. Remove the skin, stem and seeds. Another way to peel is to blister the skin of the

peppers thoroughly on a hot range or with a flame, turning frequently to prevent scorching. Steam the peppers as directed above. Slash the skin and insert a knife at the tapered end, pulling the skin off toward the stem. Remove the stem and seeds. Flatten whole peppers to remove the air. Pack into containers. For ease in separating when thawing, place freezer wrap between the peppers. Seal and freeze.

Pimientos: Select firm, crisp pimientos of deep red color. Peel by roasting in the oven 400° to 450°F for 6 to 8 minutes or until the skins can be rubbed off. Wash off the charred skins, cut out the stems and remove the seeds. Package, leaving ½-inch head space. Seal and freeze.

Nutrition for frozen peppers

	Sweet Peppers	Jalapeño Peppers	Pimientos
	1/2 cup	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon
Calories	12.0	2.0	2.7
Carbohydrate	2.6 g	0.4 g	0.6 g
Fat	0.2 g	0.0 g	0.0 g
Vitamin C	64.0 mg	1.1 mg	10.2 mg
Dietary fiber	1.9 g	0.3 g	0.4 g
Sodium	1.7 mg	2.0 mg	0.06 mg

Canning

Hot or sweet peppers, including chilies, jalapeños, and pimientos.

Quality

Select firm yellow, green, or red peppers. Do not use soft or diseased peppers.

Quantity

An average of 9 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 25 pounds and yields 20 to 30 pints — an average of 1 pound per pint.

Procedure

Select your favorite pepper(s). *Caution:* If you choose hot peppers, wear rubber gloves while handling them or wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Avoid touching your face.

Small peppers may be left whole. Large peppers may be quartered. Remove the cores and seeds. Slash two or four slits in each pepper, and either blanch in boiling water or peel using one of the peeling methods described on page 1.

Allow the peppers to cool. Place them in a pan and cover with a damp cloth. This will make peeling the peppers easier. After several minutes, peel each pepper. Flatten the whole peppers. Add ½ teaspoon of salt to each pint jar, if desired. Fill the jars loosely with peppers and add fresh boiled water, leaving 1-inch head space. Adjust the lids and process.

Pickled Bell Peppers

Yield: About 9 pints
7 pounds firm bell peppers
3½ cups sugar
3 cups vinegar (5%)
3 cups water
9 cloves garlic
4½ teaspoons canning or pickling salt

Procedure

Wash the peppers, cut into quarters, remove the cores and seeds, and cut away any blemishes. Slice the peppers into strips. Boil the sugar, vinegar, and water for 1 minute. Add the peppers and bring to a boil. Place a ½ clove of garlic and ¼ teaspoon of salt in each sterile half-pint jar; double the amounts for pint jars. Add the pepper strips and cover with the hot vinegar mixture, leaving ½-inch head space. Adjust the lids and process according to the table on page 4. Nutritional information also is on page 4.

Pickled Hot Peppers

Hungarian, banana, chile, jalapeño

Yield: About 9 pints 4 pounds hot long red, green, or yellow peppers
3 pounds sweet red and green peppers, mixed
5 cups vinegar (5%)
1 cup water
4 teaspoons canning or pickling salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cloves garlic

Recommended processing times in a pressure canner

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time (min.)	Canner gauge pressure for different altitudes (in feet)			
			Dial gauge (lbs.)		Weighted gauge (lbs.)	
			0- 2,000	2,001-4,000	0-1,000	Above 1,000
Hot	Half-pints	35	11	12	10	15
	Pints	35	11	12	10	15

Nutrition for canned peppers

	Sweet Peppers	Hot Green Chili Peppers	Jalapeño Peppers	Pimientos
	½ cup	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon	1 tablespoon
Calories	19.0	3.7	2.0	2.7
Carbohydrate	4.6 g	0.9 g	0.4 g	0.6 g
Fat	0.0 g	0.0 g	0.0 g	0.0 g
Vitamin C	51.0 mg	23.0 mg	1.1 mg	10.2 mg
Dietary fiber	2.0 g	0.1 g	0.3 g	0.4 g
Sodium				
with salt	268.0 mg	67.0 mg	191.0 mg	68.2 mg
without salt	1.0 mg	0.6 mg	124.0 mg	1.7 mg

Procedure

Caution: Wear rubber gloves when handling hot peppers or wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face.

Wash the peppers. If small peppers are left whole, slash two to four slits in each. Quarter the large peppers. Blanch in boiling water or blister in order to peel (see instructions for blistering on page 1). Cool and peel off the skin. Flatten the small peppers. Fill the jars, leaving ½-inch head space. Combine and heat the other ingredients to a boil and simmer 10 minutes. Remove the garlic. Pour the hot pickling solution over the peppers, leaving ½-inch head space. Adjust the lids and process according to the table below.

Pickled Pepper-Onion Relish

- Yield:* 9 half-pints
- 6 cups finely chopped onions
- 3 cups finely chopped sweet red peppers
- 3 cups finely chopped green peppers
- 1½ cups sugar
- 6 cups vinegar (5%), preferably white distilled
- 2 tablespoons canning or pickling salt

Procedure

Wash and chop the vegetables. Combine all of the ingredients and boil gently until the mixture

thickens and the volume is reduced by one-half (about 30 min.). Fill sterile jars with the hot relish, leaving ½-inch head space, and seal tightly. Store in the refrigerator and use within one month. *Caution:* If extended storage is desired, this product must be processed.

Piccalilli

- Yield:* 9 half-pints
- 6 cups chopped green tomatoes
- 1½ cups chopped sweet red peppers
- 1½ cups chopped green peppers
- 2¼ cups chopped onions
- 7½ cups chopped cabbage
- ½ cup canning or pickling salt
- 3 tablespoons whole mixed pickling spice
- 4½ cups vinegar (5%)
- 3 cups brown sugar

Procedure

Wash, chop, and combine the vegetables with ½ cup of salt. Cover with hot water and let stand 12 hours. Drain and press in a clean white cloth to remove all the possible liquid. Tie the spices loosely in a spice bag, add to the combined vinegar and brown sugar, and heat to a boil in a saucepan. Add the vegetables and boil gently for 30 minutes or until the volume of the mixture is reduced by one-half. Remove the

Recommended processing times for pickled peppers in a boiling-water canner

Product	Style of pack	Jar size	Processing times in minutes at different altitudes (in feet)	
			0- 1,000	1,001-6,000
Pickled bell peppers	Hot	Half-pints or pints	5	10
Pickled hot peppers	Raw	Half-pints or pints	10	15
Pickled pepper-onion relish	Hot	Half-pints or pints	5	10
Piccalilli	Hot	Half-pints or pints	5	10

Nutrition per 1 tablespoon

	Pickled Bell Peppers	Pickled Hot Peppers	Pickled Pepper-Onion Relish	Piccalilli
Calories	12.0	5.0	15.0	18.0
Carbohydrate	3.0 g	1.3 g	4.0 g	4.6 g
Fat	0.0 g	0.0 g	0.0 g	0.0 g
Vitamin C	7.0 mg	21.0 mg	7.4 mg	7.0 mg
Dietary fiber	0.3 g	0.2 g	0.2 g	0.4 g
Sodium	34.0 mg	30.0 mg	89.0 mg	358.0 mg

spice bag. Fill hot sterile jars with the hot mixture, leaving ½-inch head space. Adjust the lids and process according to the table on page 3. Nutritional information also is on page 3.

Problems and Solutions

1. Can pickled peppers be pressure canned?

It is not recommended to pressure can pickled peppers. This high heat treatment will cause peppers to become too soft and mushy. Water bath canning is the best processing method for pickled peppers.

2. Why are non-pickled peppers pressure canned?

Peppers are a low acid food. Without added acid, such as vinegar, they must be pressure canned to make them safe.

3. In mixed vegetable pickled products with peppers, can any kind of pepper be used?

Yes. Any variety of pepper can be used because of similar acid content. Do not, however, change the amount of peppers called for in the recipe. Any changes will alter the acidity of the recipe and make it unsafe.

4. When handling hot peppers, what causes the burning sensation on the skin?

Hot peppers contain a compound called capsaicin which can burn the skin. Wear rubber gloves when handling hot peppers and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face.

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Adapted from *Preserving Peppers* by Karen P. Penner, Ph.D., Foods and Nutrition, and Jeanne Dray, Extension Assistant, Foods and Nutrition, April 1995; Complete Guide to Home Canning, USDA AIB No. 539, 2009; and *So Easy to Preserve*, 5th ed., The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

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