

# Introducing Piper the Pepper

It's May – Yay for some veggiemanía! Piper the pepper is here to put a pep in your step this summer.



Hey Hey it's Piper – welcome to the pepper party. Take a seat and let me tell you a little bit about us!

We are glossy and smooth skinned and come in a variety of colours ranging from yellow to green to bright red! Inside we are mostly hollow lobes with segments which have our seeds attached to them.

## The Pepper Family

Another name for our family is the capsicums. We're closely related to the hot chillies but we're a lot sweeter tasting. We're the only member of the capsicums family that are not hot to eat!

## Did you know?

- We're actually fruits – Shock! Bet you didn't know that fact! We're prepared like vegetables so most people think we're a vegetable.
- The pepper comes from Mexico and central/south America. The Spanish and Portuguese explorers brought us to Europe.
- Aside from the common colours; we also come in purple and white. There are even black and brown bell peppers but these can be difficult to find!
- We have different names in different countries. In the USA they call us 'Bell Peppers', in Australia they call us 'Capsicums' and in Ireland we're simply called 'Peppers'.

## Availability

We're generally available all year around but we're best value from May to October.

## Why are peppers so good to eat?

All peppers have very high levels of vitamin C but red peppers have the highest levels of vitamin C. Vitamin C also helps your body absorb another mineral called iron which gives you lots of energy. Red peppers are also rich in beta carotene which changes form in the body to vitamin A. One function of vitamin A is that it helps you see in the dark!

### **How are peppers grown?**

We grow on a bush which produces white flowers. We prefer a warm tropical climate and do not like extreme changes in the weather.

The colour of the pepper depends on when the pepper is picked from the plant. If left on the plant for long enough, peppers slowly change from green to red or yellow.

As bell peppers mature their sugar and nutritional content increase. Although green peppers might be crunchier you can make dishes sweeter and healthier with red peppers.

### **How to store peppers**

Store us in the refrigerator and use us within a week.

### **Fun ways to prepare and eat peppers**

We are great to eat raw as a snack or in salads. We are also delicious cooked, and you can serve us as a veggie or added to a stir-fry. Since high heat destroys some of the more delicate nutrients found in bell peppers, it is best to eat them raw for maximum health benefit. But if you do cook them do so with low heat for a very short time.

To prepare simply remove the stem top, white ribs and seeds. To cook simply microwave or stir-fry for 2-3 minutes or bake in the oven.

### **Recipes**

#### **Stuffed Green Peppers (0 exchanges)**

Ingredients (for 2 servings):

- 50 g Low protein pasta
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 tsp salt

- 2 large green bell peppers
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 200 ml vegetable stock
- 1 tsp tomato puree (optional)
- 100 g (4 oz) chopped tomatoes (1 small to medium tomato, chopped)
- 2 tsp low protein flour mix
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Contact your dietitian for suggestions of Low protein products to use in this recipe.

Oven temperature: 160°C/Gas Mark 6

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C
2. Prepare the **pasta**: Fill a large saucepan three-quarters full with water and bring to a boil. Add the pasta, 1 tbsp of the oil, and salt to the pan. Return to a boil, stirring. Reduce the heat slightly and cook for 8 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent the pasta from sticking together. When the pasta is cooked, drain and rinse with cold water to prevent further cooking.
3. Lightly grease the base of an ovenproof dish. Wash the peppers and slice off the stalk ends. Remove the core and seeds and stand the peppers in the dish. If necessary, carefully trim the bases so that the peppers will stand firmly (take care not to make any holes, or the filling will ooze out during cooking).
4. Fry the shallots and garlic in the remaining oil for 2 minutes, without browning, over moderate heat. Stir in 3/4 of the broth and tomato relish, and bring to a boil. Cover and cook over a low heat for 5 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, skin the tomatoes, discard the seeds and chop the flesh.
6. Blend the flour mix with the remaining broth until smooth. Gradually stir the mixture into the pan and bring to a boil, stirring until the sauce thickens.
7. Stir the cooked pasta, chopped tomatoes and seasoning into the sauce. Divide the mixture evenly between the peppers in the ovenproof dish, loosely cover with foil and bake in a preheated oven at 160 for 30 minutes.

And voila – This is one of Penny’s and Pauls favourite Low protein recipes – so enjoy!

**Best bit -**

We’re naturally low in protein and can make up a delicious part of your diet – so what are you waiting for give me a try.

**How many times did you try it? \_\_\_\_\_.**

Did you earn your star? ★

