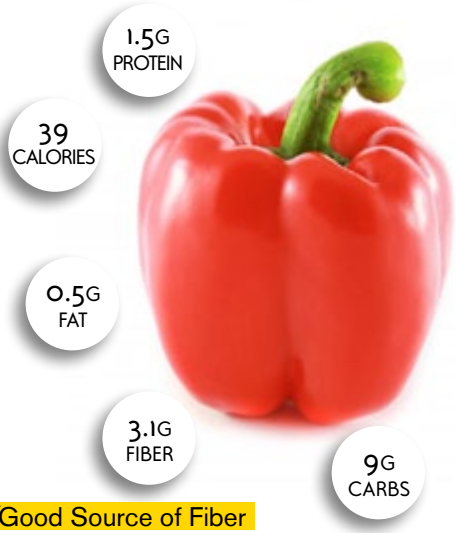
TASTEFUL HARVEST

Healthy Nutrition and Learning Success

Oklahoma farmers' markets offer a colorful variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating fruits and vegetables every day can give your family the nutrients they need to grow strong and build healthy bodies and minds. This resource, Tasteful Harvest can help your family learn how to eat healthy and be physically active every day.

PEPPERS



✓Good Source of Fiber
✓Gluten-Free
✓Low Sodium
✓Low-Fat
✓Low Calorie

Rich in antioxidants and vitamin A, vitamin B6, and vitamin C

HOW TO PICK THE BEST

- When shopping, search for brightly colored peppers with a firm skin that yields to slight pressure- skin will shine!
- Make sure the stems of the bell pepper are green in color. The peppers will be heavy for their size.
- Avoid peppers with bruises, soft spots, or shriveled skin.

HEALTHY SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- Slice raw sweet peppers and serve with low-fat dip for a snack.
- Top homemade pizza with sliced bell peppers—red, green, and yellow. For a spicy kick use chili peppers!
- Use chopped hot peppers to make spicy salsa. (Hint: For less spice, remove seeds and inner membranes.)
- Add chopped sweet peppers to salads or stir into soups and pasta sauces.
- Try a new pepper variety each week.

VEGETABLE QUESADILLAS

Makes 4 servings.1 quesadilla each. Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- Non-stick cooking spray
- ½ cup chopped green bell pepper
- ½ cup frozen corn, thawed
- ½ cup sliced green onion
- ½ cup chopped tomato
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 4 (6-inch) flour tortillas
- ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese

Directions:

1. Coat medium skillet with nonstick with cooking spray. Sauté bell pepper and corn over medium heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Add green onion and tomato.
2. Cook until heated, then stir in cilantro.
3. Heat tortillas in a separate skillet over high heat.
4. Place equal amounts of cheese and sautéed vegetables on each tortilla.
5. Fold in half and continue to cook until cheese is melted. Serve hot.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 134, Carbohydrate 20 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 7 g, Total Fat 3 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 3 mg, Sodium 302 mg

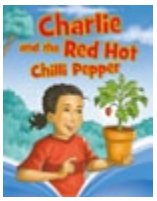
Adapted From: https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/Peppers/Peppers_Fam.pdf

PEPPER FUN FACTS

- The most common colors of bell peppers are green, yellow, orange and red. More rarely, brown, white, lavender, and dark purple peppers can be seen, depending on the variety.
- Bell peppers may be eaten cooked or raw, such as in salads.
- Bell peppers are an excellent source of vitamin A (in the form of carotenoids), vitamin C and vitamin B6.
- There are only 20 calories in 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of bell pepper.
- One bell pepper has more vitamin C than an orange or a cup of strawberries.
- Bell peppers belong to a different family from that of black pepper, but they belong to the same family as the pepper from which chili powder is made.

READING FUN

Green is a Chile Pepper
by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

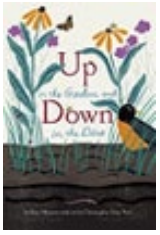


Charlie and the Red Hot Chili Pepper
by Sheryl Gwyther

If You Plant a Seed
by Kadir Nelson

Right This Very Minute
by Lisl Detlefsen

The Vegetables We Eat
by Gail Gibbons



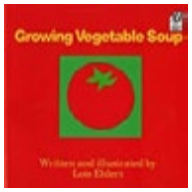
Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt
by Kate Messner

PEPPER ACTIVITIES

- Show your kids photos of green bell peppers, red and yellow bell peppers and chili peppers.
- Explain that bell peppers are sweet while chili peppers are spicy.
- Ask them what colors they see (green, red, yellow).
- Tell them peppers can also be purple and orange.

Explain that at farmers' markets, there are usually many more different kinds and colors of peppers than at the store and that they are fresher since they come straight from the farm where they grew.

- Take a visit to your local farmer's market near you.
- Talk about how peppers can be called either a fruit or a vegetable (fruit because of how it grows from a flower, vegetable because of how it is prepared)
- Ask your kids how they think peppers grow–in a tree like oranges? On a vine like tomatoes? In the ground like carrots? (They grow on small plants).



Read the story "Growing Vegetable Soup" and then make some vegetable soup! Use locally grown vegetable if possible.