



# Using, Storing and Preserving Peppers



Prepared by:

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*Michigan-grown peppers are available July through October.*

## Yield

- One small sweet pepper equals ¼ cup chopped.
- One medium sweet pepper equals ½ cup chopped.
- One large sweet pepper equals 1 cup chopped.
- Three large or five medium sweet peppers (1 pound) equals 3 to 4 cups chopped.
- An average of 9 pounds equals 9 pints for canning. A bushel weighs about 25 pounds and yields 20 to 30 pints (average of 1 pound per pint). Two-thirds of a pound (three peppers) yields 1 frozen pint.



or red pods. Wash, cut out the stems, cut in half and remove the seeds. The peppers can then be cut into rings or ½-inch strips or diced.

To blanch (which helps maintain crispness in frozen peppers): Blanch peppers that have been cut in half in boiling water for 3 minutes. Strips and rings should be blanched for 2 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, pat dry so there is no water sticking to the produce. Then package, seal, label and freeze.

## Hot peppers

Hungarian, Hot Wax, chili (numerous varieties), Habanero (extremely hot)

Wash the hot peppers, cut them open, remove the seeds and stem them. Package raw. Seal, label and freeze. **Caution:** when handling hot peppers, wear rubber gloves to prevent your hands from burning. **Do not** touch your eyes.

## Pimentos

Select firm, crisp, deep red pimentos. Peel by roasting in an oven at 400 to 450 degrees 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 from the peppers. Package, seal, label and freeze.

## Canning

**Food safety tip:** Peppers MUST be pressure canned for a specific period of time to avoid the potential of the food-borne illness botulism.

## Varieties

Sweet: Big Bertha, California Wonder, Sweet Banana, King Arthur

Pimento: Early Pimento

## Quality

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

## How to Preserve

### Freezing

#### Bell or sweet peppers

Sweet or bell peppers can be frozen without being blanched; however, because they are limp when they are thawed, it is best to use them in cooked dishes. Select crisp, tender green

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## Hot or sweet peppers

Select firm yellow, red and green peppers, such as bell, chili, Jalapeño and pimento. Do not use soft or diseased peppers. Wash and drain the peppers.

*To prepare chili and tough-skinned peppers:* (**Caution:** wear rubber gloves while handling the chilies or wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face!) Wash and dry the chilies. Slit each pepper on its side so steam can escape during roasting. Place the peppers in the oven at 400 degrees F or under the broiler for 6 to 8 minutes until the skins blister.

Allow the peppers to cool, then place them in a pan and cover them with a damp cloth to help make the peeling process easier. After the peppers are cool enough to handle (several minutes), peel each pepper. Remove the stem and seeds from the peppers.

*To prepare pimento peppers:* Scald the peppers in boiling water for about 15 to 20 minutes or roast them in the oven at 400 degrees F for 6 to 8 minutes or until the skins are blistered. Rub off the skins. Remove the stems, blossom ends and seeds. Flatten the pimentos.

*To prepare other peppers:* Remove the stems and seeds. Blanch for 3 minutes.

## Hot Pack

Small peppers may be left whole; large peppers should be quartered. Pack peppers loosely in hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. If desired, add ½ teaspoon of salt per pint. Fill the jar to 1 inch from the top with boiling water. Remove the air bubbles. Wipe the rim of the jar. Adjust the lid and process.

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## Dial-gauge pressure canner altitudes

### 0-1000 feet:

Process at 11 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

### 1001-2000 feet:

Process at 11 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

### 2001-4000 feet:

Process at 12 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

### 4001-6000 feet:

Process at 13 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

### 6001-8000 feet:

Process at 14 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

## Weighted-gauge pressure canner altitudes

### 0-1000 feet:

Process at 10 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

### 1001 feet and above:

Process at 15 pounds of pressure . . . . Pints . . . . 35 minutes

## For recipes for pickling peppers, see:

*The USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning*. 2009 revision. Andress, Elizabeth and Juda A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

## Sources

*How Much Should I Buy?* Michigan State University Extension. Reprinted 2011.

Andress, Elizabeth and Juda A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

*Preserving Peppers*. 2010. Kansas State University Research and Extension.

Coats, E.B. 1981. *Freezing Vegetables*. Mississippi State University Cooperative Extension Service.