



# Using, Storing and Preserving Peppers



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*Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Peppers* was first published in March 2015 and revised in July 2023.

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

## Yield

1 small sweet pepper	=	¼ cup chopped
1 medium sweet pepper	=	½ cup chopped
1 large sweet pepper	=	1 cup chopped
3 large 5 medium (1 pound)	=	3 to 4 cups chopped
An average of 9 pounds	=	9 pints for canning
1 bushel (25 pounds)	=	20 to 30 pints (average of 1 pound per pint)
⅔ pound (3 peppers)	=	1 frozen pint



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 in ice water for 2-3 minutes (same as blanching time), drain, pat dry so there is no water sticking to the produce. Then package, seal, label, date and freeze.

## Food Safety and Storage

- Pick or purchase peppers that are not bruised or damaged.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Wash peppers under cool running water. Do not use soap.
- Keep peppers away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- For best quality and to preserve nutrients, preserve no more than your family can consume in one year.
- 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 or red pods. Wash, cut out the stems, cut in half and remove

#### Hot peppers

Some types of hot peppers include Hungarian, hot wax, chili (numerous varieties), and 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, date and freeze.

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## Canning

Pressure canning is the *only* safe method of canning peppers. Peppers *must* be pressure canned to avoid the potential of the foodborne illness botulism.

### 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. Cut a slit in 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 air bubbles; adjust headspace if needed. Wipe jar rims with clean paper towel. Adjust the lids and process the jars (see tables that follow for recommended processing times).

Recommended process time (in minutes) for peppers in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of			
			0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or pints	35	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.

Recommended process time (in minutes) for peppers in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of	
			0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or pints	35	10 lb.	15 lb.

Let jars stand undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours, remove rings, check to make sure lids are sealed, wash jars, label, date and store. Food in jars that do not seal must be reprocessed in a clean jar with a new lid within 24 hours, refrigerated or frozen.

Tables were adapted from the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP), *Selecting, Preparing and Canning Vegetables: Peppers*, reviewed February 2018 ([https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_04/peppers.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/peppers.html)). The NCHFP adapted them from the *Complete Guide to Home Canning* (Agriculture Information Bulletin, No. 539). USDA, 2015.

## References

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