

Peppers are excellent sources of vitamins C and A and have antioxidant phytonutrients. Of the sweet peppers, red sweet peppers have highest levels of antioxidants, vitamin A and beta-carotene. A **small red bell pepper** contains:

- Over 100% daily value (DV) of vitamin C.
- 45% of the DV of vitamin A.

Hot peppers are also an excellent source of vitamin C (half of a fresh chili pepper contains over 50% DV), and contain the phytonutrient capsaicin that produces the “hot” sensation.

HOW THEY IMPROVE HEALTH

- Pepper phytonutrients have potential to reduce stress in the body, lower inflammation, and reduce risk of age-related cancers and cardiovascular disease.
- Capsaicin may have anti-inflammatory benefits and can offer cardiovascular and osteoarthritis protection.

Farm to Health Series

MAXIMIZE YOUR NUTRIENTS FROM:

PEPPERS



NUTRIENT AND PHYTONUTRIENT CHANGES

- Peppers should be stored whole in the refrigerator (up to 7 days) to preserve vitamin A and capsaicin. Chopping, then storing can cause loss of beta-carotene and vitamin A.
- To maintain vitamins A and C, use only light cooking, with short times and low temperatures.
- Canning or jarring causes significant losses in vitamins C and A – freezing is a better method of preservation. If possible, it is best to freeze peppers whole to preserve the most nutrients and phytonutrients.

This information is not meant to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. This project is made possible by funding through OSU CARES - an initiative of OSU Extension and the OSU to expand faculty, staff and student partnerships with communities throughout Ohio.

Recipe: Marinated Peppers and Zucchini with Almonds

(Reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research, www.aicr.org)

This recipe uses fresh peppers, which maximizes vitamin C and phytonutrient levels. It also incorporates oil to increase absorption of vitamin A. It does not contain hot peppers, so does not contain capsaicin.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 red pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 orange pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 small zucchini, cut in half, then thinly sliced horizontally
- 1/2 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed or 1/2 cup canned corn kernels, drained
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 1/2 tsp. apple cider vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbsp. lightly toasted sliced almonds

Directions:

- In large non-stick skillet, sauté peppers, zucchini and corn over high heat for 2-3 minutes in 1/2 Tbsp oil. Remove from heat and place in serving bowl.
- In separate small bowl, whisk together remaining oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Pour over vegetables and gently toss. Serve garnished with almonds.



4 servings. Per serving:
80 calories, 5 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 8 g carbohydrates, 2 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 7 mg sodium, 1035 IU vitamin A (21% DV), 63 mg vitamin C (105% DV)

OTHER FOOD SOURCES OF KEY NUTRIENTS AND PHYTOCHEMICALS:

Vitamin A

Sweet potatoes

Carrots

Vitamin C

Broccoli

Strawberries

Tomatoes



For more information or how to maximize nutrients in other fruits and vegetables, see <http://localfoods.osu.edu/maximizenutrients>.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OSU EXTENSION
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
CENTER FOR ADVANCED FUNCTIONAL FOODS RESEARCH & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
OSU WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER