Bell Peppers

Bell peppers are a popular vegetable in Mediterranean cooking, perhaps because they come in a variety of bright colors. You know what they say: “You eat with your eyes first!” They are also an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and a good source folic acid, and fiber, with red bell peppers packing the most nutrition. In fact, red bell peppers are richer in vitamin C than most citrus fruit! They add a touch of sweetness without the excess calories, and are just as delicious raw as they are cooked.

1. Slice bell peppers into strips and serve with hummus or your favorite dip for a healthy snack.

2. Sauté sliced bell peppers with garlic, sliced onions, and seasoning of your choice in a little extra-virgin olive oil for an easy side dish. Add tofu, sausage or fish to the pan for a complete meal.

3. Add chopped bell peppers to your omelet, quiche, or frittata for a colorful breakfast.

4. Make a simple bean salad with canned beans, diced bell peppers, onion, lemon or lime juice, a little bit of olive oil, cumin, and cayenne pepper.

5. Roast whole bell peppers in the oven at 400°F for 45 minutes, rotating every 15 minutes to brown evenly. Add to salads, sandwiches, or combine with fresh herbs, olive oil, and capers for a delicious side dish or snack.

6. Stuff peppers with a mixture of ground meat, rice, onions, tomatoes, and spices and bake in the oven at 350°F for 30 minutes for a satisfying dinner.

7. Quick pickle bell peppers with vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and garlic to keep in the fridge for up to one week.

8. Make pasta salads more vibrant by adding diced bell peppers in a variety of colors.

9. Combine finely chopped bell peppers with onion, garlic, fresh herbs, red chile flakes, vinegar, and olive oil for a striking salsa to accompany meat and fish dishes.

10. Bake sautéed sliced bell peppers and leeks with salmon fillets and white wine in foil for 10 to 12 minutes at 375°F. Serve with lemon wedges for a perfectly portioned meal.

11. Combine roasted bell peppers (see 5) with Parmesan cheese, garlic, salt, pepper, olive oil and fresh herbs in a food processor to use as a pasta sauce. Toss with toasted pine nuts for added flavor.

12. Add chopped or sliced bell peppers to stews and soups for a pop of color.

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