

PEPPERS AND CABBAGE

Peppers: Pepper recipes are as abundant as there are types of peppers -- green, red, yellow, orange, purple, brown, and even white. What many chefs don't realize, however, is that they are all the same fruit, a variation of capsicum plant. The different shades of color indicate the ripeness of the fruit and its harvesting conditions. Green peppers are the least ripe.

Many people avoid peppers, mistakenly believing all bell peppers have a hot, bitter taste. In truth, the longer the fruit ripens in the sun, the sweeter the taste.

Peppers can be used in a wide variety of delicious recipes, including stuffed and stewed entrees, and as a colorful side to other dishes such as salads or stir fry.

Peppers recipes are also a healthy addition to most meals since they are high in vitamins C and A.

Peppers can be washed, seeds removed and frozen. Slice or chop peppers (even whole) as you would like to use them. Place in freezer bags and use as needed.

When you cook with peppers choose the brightest, most colorful fruits.

Fresh peppers in good condition should have smooth, firm skin without bruising or discoloration. Consider adding diced peppers to bland dishes for a surprising flavor.

They also make excellent additions to salsa, shish kebobs, meat loaf, and soups.

Ground up peppers can be added to many recipes. To avoid overcooking the fruit, cut slices thin before grilling or sautéing – longer cooking may dull the color and reduce the visual impact of the fruit. From salsas to salads to soups to stews, peppers recipes are tasty and healthy additions to many recipes and side dishes.

Cabbage: Look for cabbage with crisp looking leaves and stems. For compact varieties, only three of four outer leaves should be open and separate from the head.

Place cabbage in a paper bag and keep in the refrigerator vegetable crisper.

Green and red cabbage will keep for 2 weeks; the other varieties will keep for 1 week.

Wash the cabbage. Shred, slice or cut wedges for the more compact varieties. Cabbage can be braised, boiled, sautéed, steamed, stir-fried or microwaved. Cabbage is relatively bland in taste. Apples, pears, raisins, curry, caraway, dill can be used to enhance flavor.

Overcooking tends to bring out an unpleasant odor. Quick cooking methods will keep cabbage crisp and relatively odor free. Use raw cabbage in salads and coleslaw. Serve cabbage as a vegetable side dish or stuff to make cabbage rolls. Cabbage is an exceptionally high source of vitamin C.