



# THE VERSATILE bell pepper

**One vine, three flavors! All bell peppers come from the same vine but offer a different flavor depending on when they are picked. A green bell pepper is picked before it's fully ripe. Left on the vine to ripen, a green pepper becomes an orange or yellow pepper with a more fruity flavor. If left on the vine even longer, the yellow bell pepper turns red and sweet!**

**F**lorida bell peppers—packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants—protect against the development of heart disease, cancer and diabetes, while providing a combination of tangy taste and crunchy texture. They can be eaten raw, stuffed, roasted, stewed or pickled. Bell peppers are packed with vitamin C. Green bell peppers have twice as much vitamin C as an orange, and red bell peppers have three times as much.

## Did you know?

- Today, most green bell peppers sold in the U.S. are grown in Florida—mostly in Collier, Hendry, Hillsborough, Manatee and Palm Beach County.
- Bell peppers are available all year round.
- Because peppers are mostly water, they provide very few calories.
- Foods high in fiber, like bell peppers, fill you up faster and make you less likely to overeat.

**In Florida, peppers are grown predominantly in Collier, Hendry, Hillsborough, Manatee and Palm Beach County.**

## Shopping, Preparing and Storing

- Avoid buying peppers with cuts, bruises, spots or shriveled stems.
- Store in the refrigerator crisper drawer for up to one week.
- It's OK to freeze bell peppers that have been cut.

## Cooking Tips

- Cut tops off peppers and stuff with rice, cheese, meat or your filling of choice and bake for a quick and filling meal—try baking them in a muffin pan to help retain their shape.
- To seed a bell pepper, hold it tightly and slam the stem end down on the counter. This will loosen the seed core, and it should pull out easily.

## STUFFED BELL PEPPERS

- 1¼ pounds lean ground beef
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 15.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup shredded lowfat cheddar cheese
- 1½ cups chicken broth



1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the ground beef, and cook until brown and crumbly. Pour off excess grease, stir in garlic, onion and tomatoes. Cook and stir until the onions soften just a bit, about 3 minutes. Stir the cheese into the mixture, and set aside.
3. Cut the tops off of the peppers, and remove the veins and seeds. Fill each pepper with the ground beef mixture and pour in some of the chicken broth. Place into the cups of a muffin tin, and replace the tops.
4. Bake in preheated oven 30 minutes.



### FRUITS

Make most of your choices whole or cut fruit instead of juice.

### VEGETABLES

Eat a variety every day. Fresh, canned or frozen.

### GRAINS

Make at least half of your grains whole grains.

### DAIRY

For adults and children 2 years and older, drink 1 percent low-fat or fat-free milk.

### PROTEIN

Choose lean meat, poultry without the skin, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy or nuts.