

# Southern Village Farmers' Market

Locally Grown  Nationally Known

August 19, 2004

Cooking Demonstration featuring Peppers

with Sheila Neal & Kelly Clark

## Peppers

**Season:** Midsummer through fall

The peppers are warm season vegetables, natives of Central and South America. Most of them belong to one species, *Capsicum annuum*, although there are some rare peppers from other species. Peppers can be divided into two main groups, the sweet peppers and the chili peppers. In general sweet peppers are large, with thick, mild-flavored flesh. They may be roughly barrel-shaped, like the bell peppers, or slender and tapering. Chilies, or hot peppers, are usually smaller than sweet peppers, conical in shape and not as meaty, but with much more fire in their taste. Peppers of both types are at their best from midsummer through the fall.

### How to select

Look for peppers that have a smooth, shiny skin, with no watery spots or wrinkles. Choose peppers that are firm and heavy for their size. And always choose ripe, colored peppers over green ones

### How to prepare

Whether you use a charcoal fire, the broiler, or an open gas flame, place the peppers as close to the heat as possible, and turn them frequently so that their skins blacken evenly. As the peppers are done, place them in a covered container so that they steam, which further loosens any clinging skin. The skin should slip off easily when the peppers are cool enough to handle.

Be especially careful when working with chilies. Do not touch your eyes or other sensitive areas while preparing them. The oil from the skins, membranes, and seeds is extremely irritating, and may cause burning and blistering. The interior membranes and seeds are especially spicy, and can be removed before adding chilies to a dish.

Text taken from Alice Waters' *Chez Panisse Vegetables*

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**[www.carrborofarmersmarket.com](http://www.carrborofarmersmarket.com)**

# Recipes

## Marinated Roasted Peppers

Whole red peppers and poblanos peppers  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Whole garlic cloves, peeled  
Basil leaves  
Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Roast both kinds of peppers (see 'how to prepare', previous page). Place roasted peppers into a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Slip off the skins when peppers are cool enough to handle. Do not rinse peppers -this washes away flavorful juices. A few bits of blackened skin left on the peppers are okay. Take out core and seeds and slice peppers into wide strips. Season with salt and pepper, marinate in olive oil with a few garlic cloves and basil leaves. This makes a great topping for bruschetta, as a condiment for meaty fish, or tossed with pasta.

You can store this covered in olive oil for a week in the refrigerator.

## Pepper and Onion Salad

Seed and slice thin some peppers of different colors and varieties. Slice a small to medium sweet red onion very thin and toss together with the pepper slices, some pitted niçoise olives, and a spoonful of capers rinsed of brine.

Make a vinaigrette with red wine vinegar and good olive oil, and season with chopped garlic, jalapeño pepper and red pepper flakes. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Cut basil leaves into a chiffonade and sprinkle over the salad. This salad should be spicy and robust; taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

Adapted from *Chez Panisse Vegetables*

## Lentil- Sweet Red Pepper Soup with Cumin & Black Pepper

3 to 4 T. extra virgin olive oil  
1/3 to 1/2 c. diced sweet red pepper  
1/2 t. whole black peppercorns  
1/4 t. cumin seeds  
1/4 c. finely diced carrot  
1/4 c. finely diced celery  
1/4 c. finely diced yellow onion  
1 to 2 garlic cloves, smashed and chopped  
1 bay leaf  
A sprig of fresh flat-leaf parsley  
1 c. lentils, preferably black or dark green French  
4 to 4 1/2 c. chicken stock or water, or a combination

Warm a tablespoon of the olive oil in a 4-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the diced pepper and cook, stirring regularly, until it begins to color slightly.

Crush the peppercorns and cumin seeds in a mortar. Add both to the peppers and cook for another minute. Add the remaining 2 to 3 tablespoons oil, carrot, celery, onion, garlic, bay leaf, parsley, and lentils and about 3 cups of the stock or water. Bring to a simmer. Stir, and taste the liquid for salt. Reduce the heat and cook uncovered, barely simmering, until the lentils are tender and have absorbed most of the liquid, about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, cover, and leave 5 minutes for the lentils to soften.

If you are going to puree or partially crush the lentils, do so now – it is most efficient to do this while the mixture is thick and dense, before you add the last of the liquid. Once you add more liquid, the lentils will find it easier to dodge the blender blades, or your pestle.

Add more liquid, in 1/2 cup doses, to bring the soup to the desired texture. Simmer, taste again, and serve.

From Judy Rodgers' *The Zuni Café Cookbook*

### **Chapel Hill~Carrboro Farmers' Markets**

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