

Did You Know?



Paprika *Capsicum annuum*

- Paprika is made from grinding air dried peppers from the common pepper plant, *Capsicum annuum*.
- *Capsicum annuum* includes sweet bell peppers as well as spicy chile pepper varieties of all different shapes and sizes.
- Paprika can range in flavor from mild (no heat) to hot or smoked, though generally it is made with red bell peppers.
- Red bell peppers smoked over a wood fire for two weeks are used to make smoked Paprika.
- The coloring agent in paprika is used to add red color to meat, sausage and other processed foods.
- This herb is a popular seasoning in many countries, including Spain, Mexico, Hungary and those in the Balkan Peninsula. Since paprika can be made from any pepper, Spanish, U.S. and Hungarian paprika all taste different. How spicy it is also depends on whether or how much of the seeds and membrane of the chile peppers are included.
- U.S. sweet paprika is generally listed at 0 on the Scoville Heat Unit Scale. Hungarian hot paprika generally ranks between 100-500 SHUs.
- Because paprika is made by finely grinding the pepper, it begins losing flavor right away. It is recommended that paprika is replaced every 6-8 months.
- Paprika is primarily a flavorless garnish on cold foods. The flavor is released with heat and it can be added at any point in the cooking process.
- Medicinal uses for paprika include using it to reduce joint pain, as a digestive aid and to assist in circulation.
- Paprika is high in vitamin C, even more than citrus fruits, high in lutein and is rich in carotenoids.
- People aren't the only creatures to consume paprika. Zoos often supplement the food of flamingos with paprika to replace the carotenoid-rich mollusks in their natural diet, which helps them maintain their brightly colored feathers.
- Has been used with henna to add a reddish hue to hair.