

Nutrition Education

Bell Peppers

Bell peppers, also known as sweet peppers, can make a colorful and nutritious addition to most any meal. Bell peppers, whose name comes from their bell shape, are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin B6, folate and potassium. The antioxidants in bell peppers are important for healthy eyes and may play a role in prevention of diseases such as cancer and heart disease. All these benefits are provided in only 20 calories per ½ cup!!

Because bell peppers lack capsaicin, they are not hot like other peppers. This makes bell peppers a good choice for use in cooking activities with young children. Below is delicious and colorful recipe featuring bell peppers that Head Start children at our centers have been enjoying this school year. The recipe is from *The Early Sprouts Cookbook* by Karrie Kalich, Lynn Arnold and Carole Russell.

Bell Pepper & Pineapple Fried Rice

Ingredients

1½ cups brown or basmati rice	¼ cup vegetable oil
2 fresh bell peppers, washed	½ cup canned crushed pineapple (in its own juice)
1-inch piece of fresh ginger root (about 2 teaspoons grated)	2 T. low-sodium, wheat-free tamari or soy sauce
2 cloves fresh garlic (to yield about 1 teaspoon crushed)	

Procedure

1. Rinse rice under running water in strainer and place in pot with 2 2/3 cups water.
2. Bring to boil. Then lower heat and simmer, covered, 25 minutes or until all water is absorbed and rice is tender. You may need to add a little more water.
3. Remove pot from stove and let sit, covered, 5 minutes.
4. Wash, deseed, and finely chop bell pepper.
5. Peel and finely grate ginger using a cheese grater, or finely dice it.
6. Remove outer skin from garlic cloves, crush cloves in garlic press, or finely chop them.
7. Add to skillet or wok: oil, bell pepper, ginger, and garlic. Raise heat to medium-high and sauté until peppers are soft. Add rice and pineapple.
8. Gently stir mixture to disperse oil and flavorings. Add soy sauce and heat an additional 1-2 minutes.
9. Remove from heat, and allow mixture to cool slightly. Transfer to serving platter. Serve family style.

Yield: 8 servings



