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Your search for an antioxidant-packed vegetable that tastes great raw or cooked stops with the bell pepper. A great source of Vitamins A and C, [bell peppers](#) come in a variety of colors and can be prepared a ton of different ways.

Like most veggies, you can buy them in their healthiest, ripest form at an outdoor farmer's market. That's where Jordan Colon buys them for his health food restaurant [Eat](#). The owner/head chef of the Brooklyn restaurant gives three easy ways to incorporate bell peppers into your diet.

#### **Stuffed bell peppers**

Here's a convenient way to pack in vegetables and healthy grains into one easy-to-make dish. Take a bell pepper -- the bigger the better if you're hungry -- and cut the top off. Remove all the seeds and set to the side. Cook a grain, such as brown rice or whole grain spelt, as you normally would, then toss it with cabbage, onions, garlic, olive oil, salt and herbs like basil and parsley, and stuff it into your pepper.

Put the peppers in the oven for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. "Wait until they start to deepen in color," said Colon. Play around with different vegetables, grains and herbs within the pepper to find the right mix for you.

#### **Green pepper puree**

Yearning for a new salsa or dip? Colon likes this recipe, which he said he made last week. "It's really simple," Colon said. "You can do it with hot or sweet peppers."

Cut a green or red bell pepper into strips, toss olive oil and salt on them and cook them in the oven for 20 minutes or until they start to brown, whichever comes first. Then throw them into a blender, add a few tablespoons of oil, a little more salt and some chili peppers that you can roast while the bell peppers bake. (Remove the chili peppers' seeds before roasting.) Finally, add herbs such as sorrel, basil and oregano. "Herbs are the key," Colon said.

Once it's blended, use as a dip for chips or a topping for rice and beans, a baked potato, a steak or even in a soup.

#### **Pepper tomato sauce**

If you eat pasta on a regular basis, it might be time to make your own homemade sauce. "Everybody should learn how to make tomato sauce," Colon said. "It's a shame people buy canned tomato sauces. It's the easiest thing to make."

Here's the game plan: Build a base for the sauce by cooking finely chopped-up onions, carrots and celery in water in a hot pan. Wait about 10 minutes until they soften. Add tomatoes, bell peppers, herbs and a little more water and cook for another 10 to 15 minutes. You can cook your pasta simultaneously with the latter phase.

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